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CRADLE LANDS

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NEW-STREET SQUARE

TIBERIAS

WITH THE SEA OF GALILEE, AND MT HERMON

M&N HANHART CHROMO LITH

CRADLE LANDS

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BY

LADY HERBERT

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LONDON
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PREFACE

THE JOURNEY detailed in the following pages was undertaken for the sake of the health of one of the party to whom the Egyptian and Syrian climates had been recommended in exchange for the damp cold of an English winter and spring. Some few portions of this Journal have already been published in a periodical entitled *The Month*, and appeared last year. But these have been modified and altered to suit the taste of more general readers, while the greater part of the work is altogether new. The writer is indebted to Henry Pillean, Esq., of Woburn Square, for his valuable artistic assistance in some of the Illustrations. The Chapter on Constantinople has been omitted, that town being familiar to all Oriental travellers.

She hopes that this work may be of interest to those who have already trodden in the same

steps, and induce others to follow them, before railroads and other contemplated innovations shall have succeeded in changing the character of that which is now rightly and emphatically called 'Holy Land.'

WILTON HOUSE:
July 1867.

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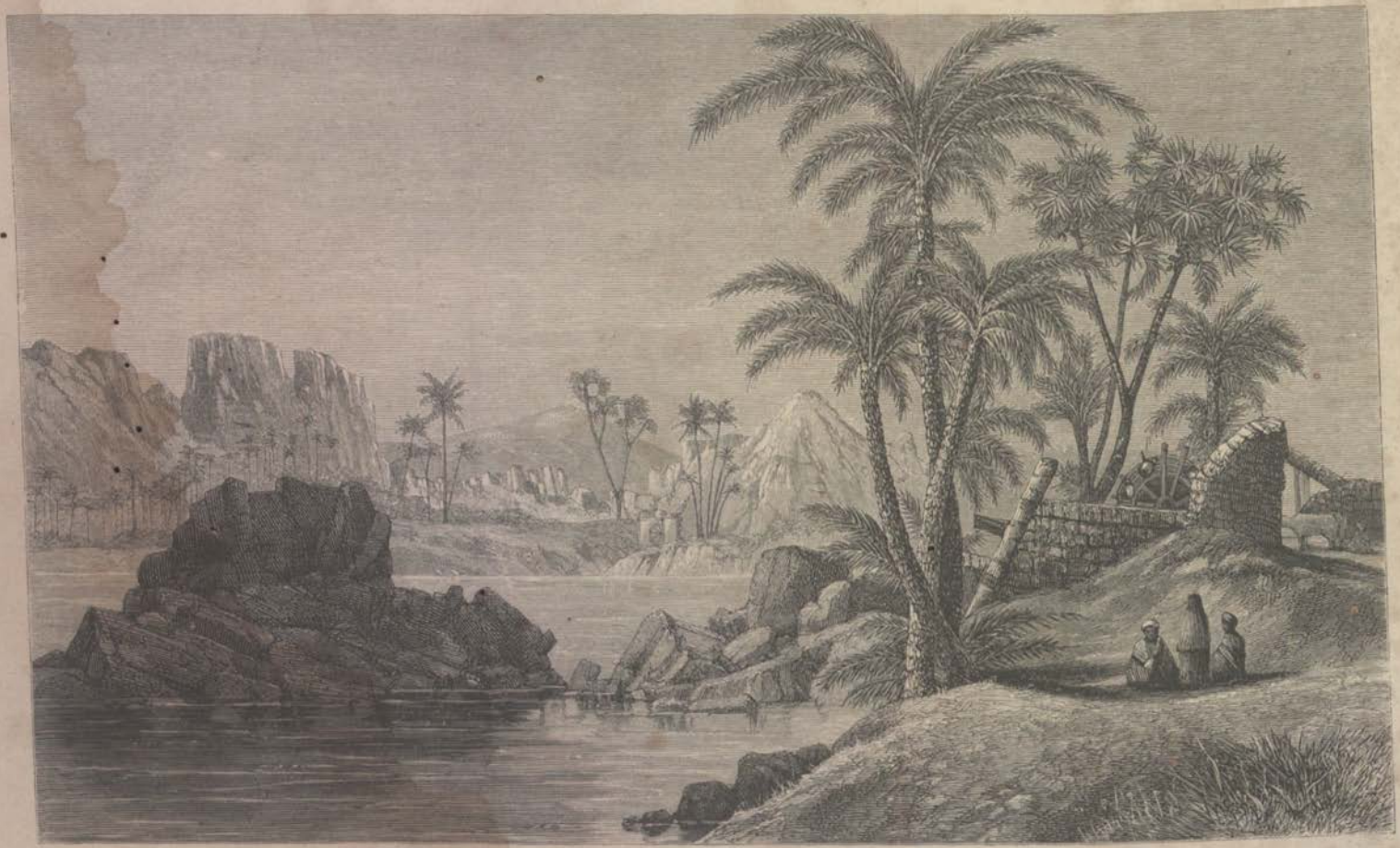
The Illustrations in this work are taken from Drawings made on the spot, and engraved on wood by George Pearson.



PHILŒ.

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CHAPTER I.

ALEXANDRIA, CAIRO, AND UPPER EGYPT.

On the 25th November, 186— a small but crowded steamer was seen ploughing its way through the waves at the entrance to the port of Alexandria. Its living freight was of a motley description: there was the usual proportion of Indian passengers—Indian officers returning with their wives after sick-leave; engineer officers going out to lay down the electric telegraph—one of whom, young in years but old in knowledge, whose distinguished merit had already raised him to the first place in his profession, was never again destined to see his native shores. Then there were others seeking health, and about to exchange the damp foggy climate of England for the warm, dry, invigorating air of Nubia and the Upper Nile.

They had had a horrible passage, in a small and badly-appointed steamer, of which all the portholes had to be closed on account of the gale, leaving the

wretched occupants of the cabins in a state of suffocation difficult to describe. So that it was with intense joy that the jetty was at last reached; and in the midst of a noise and confusion well known to all who arrive at Alexandria, the passengers were landed on the dirty quay, and were dragged rather than led into the carriages which were to convey them to the hotel. It was the Feast of St. Catherine, the patron saint of Alexandria, to whom the great cathedral is dedicated; and, in consequence, the town was more than usually gay. Towards evening a beautiful procession was formed, and Benediction sung, in the cathedral, which is served by the Lazarist Fathers. It was the best day to arrive at Alexandria, and the prayers of the virgin saint and martyr were earnestly invoked by some of the party, for a blessing on their voyage and a safe and happy return.

The best hotel in Alexandria is supposed to be the 'Europa;' but our travellers, finding it quite full, and rather dreary and barn-like in appearance, went on to Abbas', a French house, where everything was as clean and comfortable as possible. Their compulsory starvation for seven days and nights on board the steamer had made them, perhaps, less inclined to be dainty; but the cooking was really excellent, and here for the first time they tasted fresh dates in all their perfection. One comfort only was wanting in this hotel, and

that was mosquito-nets. Terribly was this want felt by one of the party, an invalid, who, suffering severely from ulcerated throat, was compelled to keep his bed. The mosquitoes were ubiquitous, and the inflammation caused by their stings rendered all sleep impossible.

The rest of the party, after making a pilgrimage to Pompey's Pillar, and inveighing against the bad taste of their countrymen, who have cut their stupid names broadly and deeply over every part of this great monument of antiquity, went on to see the Pacha of Egypt's Palace, built near the sea-shore. The fine marble hall was cool and pleasant after the glare and heat outside; and the parquet floors of the saloons, made of ebony and almond-wood, were exquisitely inlaid; but the rest of the decorations were in doubtful taste.

To one who has been for a long time in the East, Alexandria seems to be a motley collection of half European, half Arabian houses, and the refuse of the populations of each; but on first landing, everything appears new, beautiful, and strange. The long files of camels, the veiled women, the variety of the dresses, are all striking; but the one thing which even the most hackneyed Nile traveller cannot fail to admire is the vegetation. Enormous groves of date-palms and bananas, with an underwood of poinsettias, their scarlet leaves looking like red flamingoes amid the dark-green leaves, and ipomæas of every shade

—lilac, yellow, and above all turquoise-blue—climbing over every ruined wall, and exquisite in colour as in form, delight an eye accustomed to see such things carefully tended in hothouses only, or paid for at the rate of five shillings a spray in Covent Garden.

The Sisters of Charity of 'St. Vincent de Paul' have two very large establishments here—one a hospital, to which is attached a large dispensary, attended daily by hundreds of Arabs; the other a school and orphanage of upwards of 1,000 children. There are thirty-seven Sisters, and their work is bearing its fruit, not only among the Christian but the native population. To our English travellers the very sight of their white 'cornettes' was an assurance of love and kindness and welcome in this strange land; and it was with a glad and thankful heart that they found themselves once more kneeling in their chapel, and felt that no bond is like that of charity, uniting as in one great family every nation upon earth.

There is a large Anglican Church in Alexandria (the only one in Egypt), built in the Moresque style, at the cost of 14,000*l.*; but from some defect, either in the building or the material, it is already crumbling away.

Among sundry letters of introduction, our travellers had brought one from Miss Florence Nightingale to the famous Oriental scholar and

antiquarian, Mr. Harris, the great authority on all matters connected with ancient Egyptian art, and who, with his daughter, lives in a charming villa outside the town, filled with rare and beautiful objects. Miss Harris is as talented as her father, and assists him in all his literary and scientific undertakings.

In the evening there was a picturesque procession in the town, with coloured Chinese lanterns and banners, looking like a picture in the 'Arabian Nights,' as it wound round the square and through the narrow streets, the people chaunting in unison the while.

After a couple of days' rest, our English party started by the railroad for Cairo. This journey was not as commonplace as it sounds; for at each station the train was besieged by Arabs, clamouring for passages, between 300 and 400 at a time; so that it required all the efforts of the guards and their dragoman to prevent their carriage being taken from them by main force. The heat was very great, and the invalid of the party suffered terribly. Having been warned of the excessive discomfort of Shepherd's Hotel, and the impossibility of getting anything to eat there, our travellers, on their arrival at Cairo, drove straight to 'Coulon's,' where apartments had been secured for them looking on the principal square, and where the first Arabic word they learned to pronounce was '*aluk*' (leeches)—a remedy urgently needed by their sick companion,

and which, fortunately, instantly relieved the inflammation and pain from which he was suffering.

The beauty of Cairo is the theme of every writer on Egypt and the Nile; but it would be impossible to exaggerate its extreme picturesqueness. The exquisite carving of its mosques and gateways; the oriental character of its narrow streets and bazaars and courts; the beauty of the costumes, and of the fretted lattice casements overhanging the streets; the gorgeous interior fittings of the mosques, one of which is entirely lined with oriental alabaster; the magnificent fountains in the outer courts of each; the graceful minarets—all seen in the clearness and beauty of this perfectly cloudless sky, leave a picture in one's mind which no subsequent travel can efface. Outside the town is a perfect 'City of the Dead:' all the Pachas and their families are interred there, and people 'live among the tombs,' as described in the Gospels; while on Fridays the Mahometans have services there for their dead, 'that they may be loosed from their sins'—one of those curious fragments of Christianity which are continually cropping out of this strange Mahometan worship.

The first days of our travellers' arrival at Cairo were spent in preparing for their Nile voyage, and going down to Boulak to inspect boats or '*dahabiêhs*,' as they are called. The kind Consul-General had already provisionally engaged two for their party, which were to be arranged in the

Turkish fashion—the one for the women, the other for the male part of the expedition. A good many little comforts were still wanting, which the owners promised to supply, and certain under-garments were likewise ordered for the sailors: a very necessary precaution, when it is remembered that, with the exception of the white shirt, red woollen girdle, and turban, the native boatmen dispense with all other descriptions of clothing.

Whilst these things were being manufactured, our travellers visited all the most remarkable buildings in the town, including the Citadel, adjoining which is the Mosque of Mehemet Ali, built entirely of oriental alabaster. All the mosques are on the same plan, and are approached through a large court supported by pillars and paved with marble, in the centre of which is a well, for the faithful to wash before prayers. In this instance the alabaster well is beautifully carved, and the view from the terrace, overlooking the whole town and river, with the Pyramids in the distance, is the finest which can be imagined. Our party were shown the interior of the mosque, their shoes having been reverently exchanged for enormous yellow slippers at the entrance. There is no altar, but a high pulpit, from which the Koran is read, and latticed galleries above for the harems. The whole was beautifully lit with hundreds of silver lamps.

From the Mosque they went into the Palace, and

saw the spot on the terrace from whence the Mameluke, who escaped the general massacre of his race, took the famous leap on horseback, by which his life was saved as by a miracle. Afterwards our travellers visited Joseph's Well, and then, passing through the Horse Market, went on to the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, one of the most ancient in Cairo, and full of porphyry, serpentine, and other rare marbles. The priests were praying with continual prostrations, but did not seem so much affronted as usual at the advent of the strangers. The road back to the Capitol passed by the wretched mud walls, with raised traps in the flat roofs to let in air and light, dignified by the name of 'Barracks,' and into which the poor soldiers can only enter on hands and knees. No wonder that they have to be chained to prevent their escape!

The streets were a never-ending source of amusement and interest to the party—not only from their intrinsic beauty, but from the indescribable variety and novelty of the bazaars and of the costumes of the people. Ladies of whom nothing is visible but the eyes, the rest of their bodies being enveloped in gorgeous-coloured silks, and over all a cloak of black silk called a '*habaṙah*;' dervishes with their long black robes, and green turbans; 'picturesque water-carriers, with their water-skins, and others with long sticks of sugar-cane, the chewing of which is a general amusement to people of all ages and classes;

Arabs and fierce Bedouins in burnous, and Kaffirs with long guns; Syrians with red caps and flowing robes; fat Turks in flowered silk dressing-gowns and ample turbans; peasant women draped from head to foot in the blue dress and black veil which are their only covering, with a child generally sitting, monkey-like, on their shoulder; and in the midst of this motley crowd thronging the narrow streets, which are latticed over with matting to keep out the sun, strings of camels and donkeys beautifully caparisoned with crimson and embroidered trappings, closely followed by their owners, screaming out '*riglak*' (beware), '*shimlak*' (to the left), '*Ya Sitt*' (O Lady), &c., &c. (to warn the passengers out of the way), in every conceivable key and pitch of shrillness, the whole combining to form a picture unrivalled in any other Eastern town. Now and then they came on a marriage procession: the bride, in crimson and covered with jewels, walking under a canopy, supported by four men, and preceded by musicians, producing the most wonderful melody out of the most curious instruments. This kind of procession was often immediately followed by a group of little boys, dressed in red, with gold-embroidered jackets, on horseback, going to be circumcised; or else a funeral would block up the way—*i.e.*, a long string of hired mourners, men and women, veiled and howling, the coffin richly covered with silk trappings, and a diamond

'aigrette' at the head, testifying to the rank of the deceased. Nothing can be more sad than the look of the cemeteries to Christian eyes. There is nothing but a round lump of stone like this woodcut to mark the graves: the turbaned projection at the head signifying a man, and the plain bit sticking up at the base a woman: not one word of faith, or hope, or love.

One of the most interesting expeditions made by our travellers was to Heliopolis. They passed through a sandy plain, full of cotton, date-palms, and bananas, and by a succession of miserable native huts (which consist of mud walls, with a roof of Indian-corn, and a hole left in the wall for light), until they came to an obelisk, and from thence to a garden, in the centre of which is a sycamore-tree carefully preserved, under which the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph are said to have rested with the Infant Saviour on their flight into Egypt. It is close to a well of pure water, and surrounded with the most beautiful roses and Egyptian jasmine. The Mahometans have the greatest veneration for the '*Sitt Miriam*,' as they call the Blessed Virgin. They prove her Immaculate Conception from the Koran, and keep a fast of fifteen days before the Assumption; therefore no surprise was felt at seeing the care with which this grand old tree is tended and watered by them.

Returning home, they stopped at a deserted town founded by the late Abbas Pacha, which is going to be converted into a college. At present it is only a collection of wretched houses, at the doors of which swarm shoals of dirty black children, covered with flies, which settle on their faces and destroy their eyesight; while miserable dogs (half fox, half wolf) fly at the passing stranger, and women, in their long blue dresses and black veils, squat silently and patiently, staring at the strangers. To the left were several encampments of Bedouins —men who had generally come with files of camels, on the speculation of being hired for the journey across the long desert, and who had surrounded their tents with a palisade of sugar-canes, to keep out the wind and cold.

Another expedition made by the travellers was to Old Cairo, where, near the famous Nilometer, is the Coptic convent and chapel built over the House of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, where they are said to have lived for two years with Our Blessed Lord. There are some very beautiful ancient marble columns and fine olive-wood carvings, inlaid with ivory, in this church; and a staircase leads down to the Virgin's House, which is now partly under water from the rise of the Nile. It is curious how persistently all early tradition points to this spot as the site of Our Saviour's Egyptian sojourn, and it was with a feeling of simple faith in

its authenticity that one of the party knelt, and strove to realise this portion of the Sacred Infancy.

The following morning, through the kindness of M. Marietti, our travellers were shown the Museum lately established by his exertions, and containing a wonderful collection of Egyptian antiquities, arranged with the greatest taste. There is a statue in Brescia of a King Chephren, of the second dynasty, who lived 5,800 years ago, and built the second pyramid: it is as fresh as if just made, except that a little bit has been broken off the leg. One whole room is devoted to jewellery, looking as if it had just come out of Storr and Mortimer's, which was all found in the mummy-case of a certain Queen Aa Hotep, who lived in the eighteenth dynasty, or 3,700 years ago—in fact, about the time of Abraham and Sarah. Some of these necklaces were exhibited in England in the International Exhibition of 1862. The scarabees are also very fine; and there are some curious boats, daggers, hatchets, and spoons, and representations of different human figures, especially one of a woman swimming—all the attitudes and forms being identical with those which are now seen among the modern Egyptians.

There are three Catholic churches in Cairo, the cathedral being a fine large building. The Sisters of the 'Good Shepherd' have also a convent near the cathedral, and an admirable day-school and

orphanage. Many dark-eyed young girls, whom our travellers saw kneeling at Benediction there, had been rescued by the kind mother from worse than Egyptian slavery. The condition of the '*fellahs*,' or lower orders, in Egypt, is appalling, from its misery and degradation; and the good Sisters have very uphill work to humanise as well as Christianise these poor children. Nothing can be more wretched than the position of women throughout Egypt. If at all good-looking, they are brought up for the harems; if not, they are kept as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water;' and the idea of their having *souls* seems as little believed by the Mahometans as by the Chinese, whose incredulity on the subject the Abbé Huc mentions so amusingly in his missionary narrative.

On Friday, at two o'clock, our travellers went to see the dancing dervishes—a most extraordinary performance, which few people would care to witness twice. First the mufti, or sheik of the dervishes, arrived, curled himself up on a divan, smoked his pipe, and had coffee, which he offered to all the company—everyone bowing low to him, and the Arabs and Moslems all taking off their shoes on coming into his presence. Then the visitors were taken into a circular place like a bull-ring or horse-circus; the head dervish seated himself on a carpet in the middle, while a multitude of other dervishes, with high caps of a sugar-loaf shape, formed a ring

round him, and began, with a low monotonous music, to sway their heads and bodies backwards and forwards, chaunting all the while passages from the Koran. Six of these dervishes then walked round the sheik three times, after which, stretching out their arms, closing their eyes, and holding their heads on one side, they all began to spin round and round like a succession of teetotums, each time increasing in velocity, till their petticoats stuck out like umbrellas, and they were fairly exhausted. As soon as one set dropped another took up the dance, each concluding by a prostration before the Great Dervish, whose hand they kissed. The same thing was repeated for an hour, till our travellers became nearly as giddy as the performers.

Before leaving Cairo, the English ladies were invited to spend an evening in the Royal Harem, and accordingly, at eight o'clock, found themselves in a beautiful garden, with fountains, lit by a multitude of variegated lamps, and were conducted by black eunuchs through trellis-covered walks to a large marble-paved hall, where about forty Circassian slaves met them, and escorted them to a saloon fitted up with divans, at the end of which reclined the Pacha's wives. One of them was singularly beautiful, and exquisitely dressed in pink velvet and ermine, and priceless jewels. Another very fine figure was that of the mother, a venerable old princess, looking exactly like a Rembrandt just come

out of its frame. Great respect was paid to her, and when she came in, everyone rose. The guests being seated, or rather squatted, on the divan, each was supplied with long pipes, coffee in exquisitely jewelled cups, and sweetmeats, the one succeeding the other without intermission the whole night. The Circassian slaves, with folded hands and downcast eyes, stood before their mistresses to supply their wants. Some of them were very pretty, and dressed with great richness and taste. Then began a concert of Turkish instruments, which sounded unpleasing to English ears, followed by a dance, which was graceful and pretty; but this again followed by a play, in which half the female slaves were dressed up as men, and the coarseness of which it is impossible to describe. The wife of the Foreign Minister kindly acted as interpreter for the English ladies, and through her means some kind of conversation was kept up. But the ignorance of the ladies in the Harem is unbelievable. They can neither read nor write; their whole day is employed in dressing, bathing, eating, drinking, and smoking.

Before the close of the evening, Princess A——, addressing herself to the mother of the party, through her interpreter, spoke very earnestly and seriously about her daughters (then twelve and fourteen years of age), remonstrating with her on their being still unmarried, and adding: 'Next Friday is the most auspicious of all days in the

year for betrothal. I will have six of the handsomest and straightest-eyebrowed pachas here for you to choose from.' In vain the English lady refused the intended honour, pleading that in her country marriages were not contracted at so early an age, to say nothing of certain differences of race and of faith! The Princess was not to be diverted from her purpose, and persisted in arranging the whole of the Friday's ceremonial. Let us hope that the young 'straight-eyebrowed pachas' found some other fair ladies, to console them for the non-appearance of their wished-for English brides on the appointed day. The *soirée* lasted till two o'clock in the morning, when the royalty withdrew; and the English ladies returned home, feeling the whole time as if they had been seeing a play acted from a scene in the 'Arabian Nights,' so difficult was it to realise that such a kind of existence was possible in the present century.

The Sunday before they left, curiosity led them to witness the gorgeous ceremonial of the Coptic Church. The men sat on the ground with bare feet, the women in galleries above the dome, behind screens. The Patriarch—who calls himself the successor of St. Mark, and is the leader of a sect whose opinions are almost identical with those condemned by the Council of Chalcedon as the Eutychian heresy—was gorgeously attired in a chasuble of green and gold, with a silver crosier in one

hand (St. George and the Dragon being carved on the top), and in the other a beautiful gold crucifix, richly jewelled, wrapped in a gold-coloured handkerchief, which everyone stooped to kiss. After the reading of the Gospel and the Creed, the people joined with great fervour in the Litanies; and then began the consecration of the sacred Elements, which lasted a very long time. The Holy Eucharist was given in a spoon to each communicant, the bread being dipped in the wine, and the Patriarch laying his hand on the forehead of each person while he gave the blessing. At the same time, blessed bread stamped with a cross, and with the name of Christ, was handed round to the rest of the congregation, like the *pain bénit* in village churches in France. The Copts boast that there has never been the slightest alteration in their religious rites since the fourth century, and they are undoubtedly the only descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

The following morning a portion of our travellers started by train for Suez, across a waving billowy-looking tract of interminable sand. Except the 'halfway house' (a miserable shed), there is no human habitation all the way, and nothing to be seen but long files of camels slowly wending their way across the desert. After enjoying for a few minutes the first sight of the Red Sea, the Consul obligingly lent them horses to ride to the Lesseps Canal, which was then completed to within six

miles of Suez. Upwards of 5,000 Arabs had been pressed into the service by the Pacha, and the poor creatures were toiling under the burning sun, with no pay and wretched food, and, when night came, sleeping under the banks. The mortality among them was frightful; but it was in this way that the Pacha paid for his shares! Our travellers tasted the water, the first that had ever been brought to Suez, except by camels, or, of late, by the *water-train.* It is difficult to realise the fact of a town of this size being entirely without fresh water until now; which accounts for the absence of the least kind of vegetation.

The next morning a steamer took our party early to the Wells of Moses, about nine miles up the Gulf of Suez, where they landed, being carried through the surf by the Chinese rowers. Each of the wells is enclosed in a little fence, and belongs to a Suez merchant. It is a most curious spot, so green and lovely in the midst of such utter desolation. There are dates and bananas, roses and pomegranates, salads and other vegetables, all growing in the greatest luxuriance. Long strings of camels filed across the sand on their way to Mount Sinai, and the colouring of the mountains was exquisite. The shore was covered with coral and shells.

After spending an hour or two there, and reading the Bible account of the spot, our travellers

returned to the ship, and went across the gulf to see the exact place where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea when pursued by Pharaoh. The view was beautiful, and the Hill of Barda stood out brightly, with its jagged points clear and purple against the glowing sky. Then they visited the English burial-ground—a most dismal place, unmarked by a single cross or Christian emblem, with a mud house in the centre of the low sandy island on which it is situated. '*We* have the Crescent everywhere—you, Christians, are ashamed of your Cross!' had been the exclamation of a clever Moslem to one of the ladies the day before; and the reproach was certainly deserved.

There are a large number of English engineers at work just now on a new dock at Suez. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company pay the Pacha 200,000*l.* a year, for the use of the rail and the overland route through Egypt. The hotel and everything connected with it is their property, being established for the use of the Indian passengers. The Catholics have a small church at Suez, but are building a larger one, as their mission is greatly on the increase. There is no Protestant chapel.

Our travellers returned that evening to Cairo, and for the first time dined and slept on board their boats, or *dahabiêhs*. The first sensation was one of discomfort at the smallness of the cabins;

but they soon got used to their floating homes, and the beauty of the weather enabled them to live all day long on the awning-covered poop, so that they ceased to feel cramped and uncomfortable. The following day, the wind being contrary, Latifa Pacha, the head of the Admiralty—who had paid them a visit the evening before, with his interpreter, and had coffee in the saloon of the 'Zarifa,' which was the name of the ladies' boat—gave them a steamer to tow them up to Gizeh, from whence they were to visit the Pyramids. The excessive depth of each stone makes the ascent an arduous one for ladies, but the view amply repays one for the exertion. On one side is the interminable desert—on the other the fertile 'Land of Goshen.' Owing to the recent inundations, the party had continually to dismount from their donkeys, and be carried across the water on men's backs. The next few days passed quickly, our travellers landing every morning to walk and sketch (while the men were 'tracking' along the shore), and making acquaintance with all the people and places of interest as they passed.

At El-Atfeh was a remarkable dervish of the tribe they had seen 'dancing' in Cairo, who showed them his house, in the court of which was the tomb of his predecessor, hung with ostrich-eggs, canoes, and other votive offerings, but hideously painted in bright-green. A favour-

able wind the following day brought them to Beni-Sooef, where they landed to make some trifling purchases in the bazaars, and to see the Governor's house and the Camp; there were above 6,000 troops quartered there. At Bibbeh there is a very fine Coptic church, with a picture of St. George and the Dragon, who is the favourite saint throughout the East, and venerated alike by Christian and Moslem. Again, on their way to Minieh, they passed by a fine Coptic convent, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, on the top of a cliff; and two of the monks swam to the boats to ask for alms and offerings, which are never refused them. From thence they came to 'Gebel-e-Tayr,' or the Mountain of the Birds, to which a curious legend is attached. All the birds in the country are said to assemble once a year on this mountain, and after having selected one of their number to remain there till the following year, the rest fly away into Africa, only returning the ensuing spring to release their comrade, and substitute another in his place.

The travellers had begun to feel thoroughly at home in their tiny cabins, and the only disadvantage they found was in the difference of speed between their two boats. The 'Zarifa' was of iron, and heavier than the 'Rachel,' which was of wood. But the 'Rachel' contained not only the gentlemen of the party, but also the kitchen and the cook; and it was with a feeling of something like desperation,

now and then, that the unfortunate ladies on board the 'Zarifa,' about dinner-time, saw their only hope of food disappearing in the far distance!—or still worse, when, on an unforeseen sandbank (which the constant shifting of the Nile often produces), they would be stuck high-and-dry for hours, without any fault on the part of the *reis*, or captain, while the 'Rachel' would sail merrily on, regardless of their fate. The air of the Nile is wonderfully invigorating, and it certainly needs a good appetite to be able, for four or five successive months, to live on nothing but lean chickens and eggs. The mutton is woolly and bad; and the fact of your sheep accompanying you in the little boat for weeks, like 'familiar friends,' disinclines you all the more to eating them at the end.

At Minieh the boat's crew insisted on stopping to bake. In spite of warnings, our travellers had not been sufficiently positive and explicit respecting the places where this important business was to be transacted; and the men will always stop, if they can, at the most objectionable stations, when their time is spent in every sort of excess. Minieh was uninteresting enough; but some of the party sketched, to while away the time, and there saw the only tree (except a palm) which was visible on the Nile banks from Cairo to Wady Halfa. It was a sycamore-fig, and grew close by the red-and-white minaret of the Governor's house.

The weather was glorious—a dead calm—and the sunsets were as gorgeous as the sunrises were delicate and ethereal. Nothing can surpass the 'afterglow' of an Egyptian evening sky. On the 20th December they reached Sawada, which is a village somewhat inland, but containing a large Coptic convent and church, served by six priests, and with a congregation of upwards of 1,000 Christians. It is also an important burial-place, and there are multitudes of little domes looking like children's sand-basins reversed, but each surmounted by a cross. One of the ladies was sketching this picturesque village from a palm-grove at the entrance of the principal gate-way, when a venerable priest approached her, and made that sign which in the East is the free-masonry of brotherhood—the sign of the Cross. The lady instantly responded, and the old priest, joyfully clapping his hands, led her into the church, showing her all its curious carvings and decorations, and several very ancient MSS. There are some fine mountains at the back, in which the gentlemen of the party discovered some wolves.

The next day brought our travellers to Beni-Hassan. The caves, which are about three miles from the shore, were originally used as tombs by the ancient Egyptians, and are covered with paintings and hieroglyphics; but their chief interest arises from their having been the great hiding-place of

the Christians during the persecutions, and also used as cells by St. Anthony, St. Macarius, and other anchorites. A little farther on, near Manfaloot, is the cave of St. John the Hermit, venerated to this hour as such by the natives. This part of the Nile is dangerous, on account of the sudden gusts which come down from the gorges of the mountains. There is a wonderful echo in one part, and a succession of curious caverns on both sides of the shore.

On Christmas Eve our travellers arrived at Sioot, and found all the American and English boats illuminated with coloured lights, and decorated with palms. It was a glorious moonlight night, and most of the owners of the *dahabiêhs* rowed about in the evening, enjoying the unusual scene, and thinking of the glorious midnight Masses in other lands. There is a Catholic church here, served by the Franciscan Mission, which is under the special protection of the Emperor of Austria, who has sent some very good pictures and ornaments for the altars. The Mass was reverently and well sung, and about 150 Catholics were present.

After Mass the Italian Padre gave them coffee. He had been educated at the 'Propaganda' at Rome, but had been twenty-four years in Egypt, so that he had almost forgotten every language except Arabic. He said that they had now obtained a union with the Copts, and a Coptic Mass followed

the Latin one. The Mission had been established at Sioot four years before, by the intervention of Said Pacha, but had encountered great opposition at first from the Moslems. Two bodies of Christian saints, fresh and uncorrupted, with all the signs of martyrdom, had been lately discovered in the caves above the town; but the Mahometans would not allow the Christians to have them. The good old Franciscan had studied medicine, and thus first made his way among the people. Now he seems to be universally respected and beloved.

Our party rode through the dirty bazaars of this so-called capital of Upper Egypt, and ascended to the caves. But the 'City of the Dead,' a little beyond the town, is mournfully beautiful and silent. It is composed of streets of tombs, of white stone or marble—the only sign of life being the jar of water left in front of each, to water the aloes planted in picturesque vases at the gate of each tomb. A whole poem might be written on the thoughts suggested by those silent streets. It was this 'City of the Dead' which is said to have occasioned the valuable lesson given by St. Macarius to the young man who had asked him 'how he could best learn indifference to the world's opinion?' He directed him to go to this place, and first upbraid and then flatter the dead. The young man did as he was bid. When he came back, the saint asked him 'What answer they had made?' The young man replied, 'None

at all.' Then, said St. Macarius, 'Go and learn from them neither to be moved by injuries nor flatteries. If you thus die to the world and to yourself, you will begin to live to Christ.'

Here, for the first time, our travellers realised the horrors of an Egyptian conscription. A number of villagers coming in to the Sunday's market were at once seized, chained together, and thrown on the ground like so much 'dead stock,' to be packed off on board a government vessel when the full complement had been secured. The screams and howls of their wives and daughters, throwing dirt on their heads and tearing their hair, in token of despair, when their frantic efforts to release them from the recruiting-sergeants were found ineffectual, were most piteous to hear. The poor fellows rarely survive to return to their homes; and their pay and food are so miserably small and scanty, that to be made a soldier is looked upon as worse than death. They maim themselves in every way to escape it—cutting off their forefingers, putting out their eyes, and the like. There is scarcely a man on board the boats who is not mutilated in some such manner.

Five or six of the Sioot mosques have beautiful minarets and very fine doorways with Saracenic mouldings, and what we should call 'dog-tooth' arches. The Pacha has a beautiful garden, but it is very ill-kept. In the evening, being Christmas Day, all the boats were illuminated with Chinese lan-

terns and avenues of palms; while the sailors made crosses and stars of palm-leaves, to hang over the cabin-doors. A beautiful moonlight night added to the effect of these decorations, as the party rowed round the different '*dahabiêhs*,' the 'Adeste fideles' sounding softly across the water.

The following morning, a favourable wind carried them on to Ekhnim, where there is another Franciscan missionary and church. The priest is a Neapolitan, and had begun his labours at Suez. His only companion was a native Copt, who had been educated at the Roman 'Propaganda.' They have about five hundred Catholics in their congregation, and a school of fifty or sixty children. The church was built in the fifteenth century, and is under the protection of a Christian sheik, to whom our travellers were introduced, and who courteously invited them into his house. The courtyard of the Catholic church was crowded with native Christians who had thus escaped from the conscription, and were safe under the roof of the priest. The sheik conducted his guests to his house, the only good one in Ekhnim, and furnished more or less in European style, as he had been at Cairo, and attached to the household of the late Viceroy. They sat on the divan, with pipes and coffee, talking Italian with the priest, when the sheik, as a great honour, allowed them to see his wife, and afterwards his daughter—a bride of thirteen,

married to the son of the Coptic bishop. She was dressed in *red*, as a bride, with a red veil and a profusion of gold ornaments and coins strung round her neck and arms; but was too shy and frightened, poor child! to speak to the strangers.

The sheik and the whole population escorted our travellers back to their boats with every demonstration of respect; and then the principal chiefs, with the priest, were invited to come on board and have coffee and pipes, which they accepted. The Franciscan Father had been for seven years at Castellamare, and felt the change terribly; but said that the climate was good, and that the comfort of feeling one was working for God strengthened his hands when he was inclined to despond. He complained of the lamentable ignorance of the Coptic priests, who know nothing of the history of their interesting old churches and convents, and only tell you 'they were built before their fathers were born!' The two large Coptic convents formerly existing in the mountains above the town are deserted; but their church at Ekhnim is the oldest now remaining in Egypt, and full of curious carving and very ancient pillars.

Ekhnim itself is a picturesque town, with a number of castellated pigeon-houses; the principal mosque has a fine doorway carved in stone. There are remains of really first-rate sculpture on all the principal buildings; but the present inhabi-

tants are as dirty and degraded as the rest of their neighbours. Their only manufacture is that of pots and pans, which are beautiful in shape, but so coarse and clumsy in material that our travellers did not buy any. It was here that Nestorius, after sixteen years' exile, died, and was buried, in the fifth century. The peasants made a present to the ladies of a quantity of '*kishteh*,' a kind of Devonshire cream made of buffalo's milk, and looked upon as a great delicacy in the East.

On New Year's Day our travellers arrived at Denderah, and crossing over the river in their small boat, went on donkeys to see the wonderful Temple of Athor. The heat was very great, and it required some courage to attempt to sketch. Important excavations have lately been made here; but the greater portion of the large temple is still half-buried in the sand.

At five o'clock the following morning the boats arrived at Keneh, and some of the party went on shore to Mass, that being also a Franciscan station. The church is small, but very nicely kept; the place, however, is unhealthy, and the good Franciscan father was very low-spirited at the mortality among his companions. He has lately started a school, and has about twenty children; but his life is a very desolate one, having no European to speak to, or anyone to sympathise in his work. After Mass he took our travellers to see

the making of the '*goolehs*,' or water-bottles, which are so famous throughout Egypt, and are made solely in this place, of the peculiar clay of the district, mixed with the ashes of the halfeh-grass. They are beautiful in form, and keep the water deliciously cool.

After a breakfast of coffee and excellent dates at the sheik's house, the party re-embarked, and arrived that evening at Negaddi. Here, again, they found a Catholic mission. The superior, Padre Samuele, had been labouring there for twenty-three years. He was of the Lyons Mission, and was the only one who had survived the climate. Four of his brethren had died within the last twelvemonth, and he had just dug the grave for the last. They had a large and devout congregation, with a school of one hundred and fifty children, and had been building a new church of very good proportions. But now the good father has to labour and live alone. He said, however, that he had written to Europe for fresh workers, whom he was anxiously expecting. Negaddi is remarkable for its turreted pigeon-houses, painted white and red, which form an amusing contrast to the miserable mud-holes in which the inhabitants live. One of the party shot a fine pelican here, which, unfortunately, was spoiled in stuffing. There are numerous flocks of these and other birds on the low sandy shores opposite the village.

The following evening found our travellers at

Thebes, after a somewhat weary day's 'tracking,' owing to the dead calm. The town itself is a surprise and disappointment. There are literally no shops, no bazaar, no houses but the two or three belonging to the Consuls, which are built out of and in the midst of the temples. But the said temples are unrivalled for interest and beauty. Karnac, either by daylight or moonlight, is a building apart from all others in the world for vastness of conception and magnificence of design. 'There were giants in those days.' The same may be said of the Vocal Memnon, of the Memnonium, of Medemet Haboo, and the rest. The marvel is, what has become of the people who created such things—who had brought civilisation, arts, and manufactures to such perfection that nothing modern can well surpass them. Is it not a lesson to our pride and our materialism, when we think of them and of ourselves, and then see the degraded state of the modern Egyptian, the utter extinction of the commonest art or even handicraft among them, so that it is scarcely possible, even in Cairo, to get an ordinary deal table made with a drawer in it?

A few days after our travellers' arrival, they started off on donkeys for the Tombs of the Kings, which are in a wild, rocky, and sandy ravine, about five miles the other side of the river, which is crossed by a picturesque ford. On their left they passed by a very pretty small temple called 'Dayr-el-Medeeneh.'

The most beautiful of the tombs are those discovered by Belzoni and Bruce, but they are too well-known to need description. What struck our party the most were the paintings, of a purely domestic character, in a succession of small rooms excavated by Mr. Bruce, and where every detail of home-life and furniture is represented with the most wonderful accuracy. But the air in these tombs is so stifling and bad, that it was a great relief to have finished their exploration.

After resting a little in the shade of the rocks, and eating their luncheon, our party started to return home; but were, unfortunately, persuaded to try a 'short cut' across the mountains, by a path so steep and so precipitous that only the impossibility of retracing their steps gave them the courage to proceed — and this with the thermometer at 98° in the shade, and the air blowing from the desert being like that from the blast of a furnace! In one place they found themselves hemmed in by a circle of rocks, the only means of exit being through a rift or chasm partly blocked by huge loose stones, up which they were literally hoisted by main force, by their Arab guides; who, as in the ascent of the Pyramids, put their hands under their arms, and so sprung them from stone to stone. When, at last, they reached the plains which they had left in the morning, exhaustion compelled them to lie down for some hours before they could

resume their march. The fields were emerald-green with the spring crops, the giant 'Vocal Memnon' standing out grandly and alone in the midst of the plain; while a quantity of large white-winged vultures were feeding in the meadows, and offering tempting shots to the sportsman.

The next morning the obliging English Consul, Mustapha Aga, placed his dromedaries at the disposal of the party, for an expedition at some little distance from the town; but their first experience of riding on camels was not satisfactory. Even after the difficulties of mounting had been overcome (when you are first thrown violently forward and then backward, as the beast, who has laid down to receive his burden, rises first on his hind-legs and then on the fore, with a jerk impossible to describe), the long, low, swinging motion of the animal produces, on people unaccustomed to the peculiar action, an effect exactly like sea-sickness, and which it requires weeks of practice to conquer altogether. In the evening Mustapha held a reception, and introduced dancing-girls for the amusement of his guests; but this exhibition was not according to English taste, and the ladies returned early to their *dahabiêh*. Lady Duff-Gordon was staying at Thebes for her health, and living in a pretty little apartment of the French Consul's house, in the heart of one of the old temples. There is no Catholic mission at Thebes, but a Coptic bishop,

who received our travellers very kindly, showed them his church, and gave them coffee on a terrace overlooking the Nile. This evening was 'twelfth-night,' and the boats were again illuminated and decorated with palms, the whole having a beautiful effect reflected in the water.

After spending a week at Thebes, our travellers sailed on to Assouan, visiting the Temples of Esneh, Edfoo, and Komom-Boo on their way, and coming into the region of crocodiles and pelicans, and of the Theban or dôm palm—less graceful than the date-palm, but still beautiful, and bearing a large nutlike fruit in fine hanging clusters. It grows in a peculiar way, the stem being bifurcated at a certain height, and the top crowned with fanlike leaves, looking at a distance like ostrich-feathers. Between Edfoo and Thebes are shown some caves, in one of which St. Paul, the first hermit, passed so many years of penitence and prayer. He was discovered by St. Anthony in his old age, when tempted to vain-glory—God having revealed to him that there was a recluse more perfect than himself, whom he was to go into the desert and seek. A beautiful picture in the gallery at Madrid, by Velasquez, represents the meeting of the two venerable saints, the dinner brought to them by the raven, and the final interment of St. Paul by St. Anthony in the cloak of St. Athanasius, the lions assisting to dig the grave.

Assouan is, as it were, the gate of the Cataracts, and is on the borders of Nubia, the great desert of Syene being to the left of the village. The Nubian caravans were tented on the shore, and tempting the Europeans with daggers, knives, ostrich-eggs, poisoned arrows, rhinoceros-hide shields, lances, and monkeys. The climate was delicious. There is no country in the world to be compared with Egypt at this time of the year, because, in spite of the heat, there is a lightness and exhilaration in the air which makes everyone well and hungry. To an artist the colouring is equally perfect. No one who has not been there can imagine what the sunrises and sunsets are, especially the afterglow at sunset. No artificial red, orange, or purple can approach it. Then the gracefulness of the palms on the banks, the rosy colour of the mountains, the picturesque *sakeels* or water-wheels, and the still prettier *shadoof*, with its mournful sound, which seems as the wail of the patient slave who works it day and night, and thereby produces the exquisite tender green vegetation on the banks of the river, due to this artificial irrigation alone:—all are a continual feast to the eye of the painter. And if all this is felt below Assouan, what can be said of Philæ—beautiful Philæ—that 'dream of loveliness,' as a modern writer justly calls it!

Our travellers, while waiting for the interminable arrangements with the Reis of the Cataracts, took

the road along the shore; and after passing through a succession of curious and picturesque villages, arrived at one called Mahatta, where they hired a little boat to take them across to the beautiful island. Rocks of the most fantastic shapes are piled up on both sides of the shore; but when once you have emerged from these into the deep water, 'Pharaoh's Bed' and the other temples stand out against the sky in all their wondrous beauty. Philæ was the burial-place of Osiris, and 'By him who sleeps in Philæ!' was the common oath of the ancient Egyptians. The temples are too well known by drawings to need description; but what is less often mentioned by travellers is that the larger one, originally dedicated to the Sun, was used for a long time by the Christians as a church. Consecration-crosses are deeply engraved on every one of those grand old pillars; and at one end is an altar, with a cross in the centre, in white marble, and a piscina at the side, with a niche for the sacred elements; and above this recess is a beautiful cross, deeply cut in the stone, together with the emblem of the Vine. The cross is also let in into the principal gateways. There was an Italian inscription commemorating the arrival of the first Roman mission sent by Gregory XVI., and a tablet in French recording the arrival of the French army there under Napoleon in 1799, signed by General Davoust.

The gentlemen of the party determined to pitch

their tents in the island till the question of the passing of the Cataracts was decided; and while this operation was going on, one of the ladies sat down to sketch. She was quietly painting, luxuriating in the beauty and silence around her, and watching the sun setting gloriously behind the temple, when all of a sudden a deep bell boomed across the water, and was repeated at due intervals three times. It was the 'Angelus.' Even the least Catholic of the party was struck and impressed by this unexpected sound, so unusual in a country where bells are unknown, and the only call for prayer is from the minaret top. Instinctively they knelt, and then arose the question, 'Where could the sound come from?' There was no sign of habitation or human beings, either on the island itself or on the opposite shores, and the dragoman himself was equally at fault. At last, on questioning the boatmen, they found that behind some hills a short distance off was a convent—a sort of 'convalescent home' for the sick monks of the Barri Mission.

The English lady determined at once to go and see it, and on arriving at the long low stone building, found that the Franciscan father, who was almost its solitary occupant, had just returned from the White Nile, being one of a mission to the blacks in the Barri country, a month's journey south of Khartoun. He had been at death's door from fever; and on leaving Khartoun for Philæ (an eighteen days' ride

on camels), had been attacked by dysentery, and left for dead in the burning desert by the caravan. Only a faithful black convert remained by his side, and he felt that his last hour was come; when the arrival of poor Captain Speke, on his way home from one of his last explorations, changed the state of things. With true Christian charity, our countryman at once ordered a halt, and devoted himself to the nursing and doctoring of the dying monk; so that in a few days he was so far recovered as to be able to resume his journey, and arrived safely at Philæ. He said he owed his life, under God, entirely to the kindness of this Englishman; and his only anxiety seemed to be to show his gratitude, by doing everything he could for those of his nation. He invited our travellers to take up their abode in the convent, and gave them a most interesting account of the missionary work of his order. The monks have chartered a small vessel, which they have called the 'Stella Matutina,' and which plies up and down the river, and enables them to visit their stations on each bank. But they have every kind of hardship to encounter from the treachery, stupidity, or positive hostility of the different tribes, from the intense heat, and, above all, from the deadly malaria, which had carried off seventy of their brethren in three years. But there are ever fresh soldiers of this noble army ready and eager to fill up the ranks.

The ladies rode home by way of the desert, and

reached their boats in safety. The next morning, at five o'clock, the same road was resumed by two of the party, who were anxious to reach the convent in time for the early Mass. They met nothing on their seven-miles' ride but a hyæna, who was devouring a camel which they had left dying the night before. The little convent chapel was very nice; and among the vestments sent by the *œuvre apostolique*, and worked by the ladies of the Leopoldstadt Mission, one of the party recognised a court-dress which had been presented for the purpose by a Hungarian friend of hers at Rome. It was strange to find it again in the depths of Nubia! The Mass was served by two little woolly-haired negro boys from the good old Father's school, whose attachment to him was like that of a dog to its master. He was in some trouble as to finding clothes for them. The Nubians dispense with everything of the kind, except a fringed leathern girdle round the loins, decorated with shells. The children have not even that. However, in the *dahabiéh* a piece of rhododendron-patterned chintz was found, carefully sent from England for the covering of the divans; and with that, certain articles of dress were manufactured, gorgeous in colouring, and therefore perfect in native eyes, however ludicrous and incongruous they might appear to Europeans.

The following day was fixed for one of the boats to go up the Cataracts, and the party started early

for what is called the 'first gate,' to see the operation. No one who has not lived for some months with this '*peuple criard*,' as Lamartine calls them, can imagine the din and screaming of the Arabs as each dangerous rapid is passed; the *reis* all the time shouting and storming, and leaping from one stone to the other, like one possessed. But the ascent is child's play compared to the descent. So many accidents have happened in the latter, and so many boats have been swamped, that the captains now insist on the passengers landing on an island near, while their boats rush down the rapids. It is a beautiful sight, the way those apparently unwieldy vessels are steered, and clear the rocks as it were with a bound, amidst the frantic yells and cheers of the whole population. A number of men, for a trifling *baksheesh*, swam down the current on logs—one with his little child before him; but an Englishman, attempting to do it a year or two ago, was caught in the whirlpool, and instantly drowned. After watching this exciting operation, the party dined together at Philæ in their tent, and then rowed round and round the island by moonlight, which exceeded in loveliness all they had hitherto seen: the vividness of the reflections was beyond belief, and reading or writing was as easy as at noon-day.

One of the ladies availed herself of the kind Father Michael Angelo's proposal, and slept at the convent. He gave her some curious arms, and hip-

popotamus teeth from the White Nile, and some ostrich eggs, arranged as drinking-vessels with shells and leather strips—his sole furniture in his native tent. The English lady, in return, gave him a quantity of medicines, which he eagerly accepted for his mission, to which he was hoping to return.

The next day, Father Angelo escorted them to see the Island of Biggeh with its picturesque temple, and then to the quarries of Syene, where an uncut obelisk of great size still remains embedded in the sand. Some idea was entertained in England of using it for Prince Albert's monument; but the difficulty of carriage and the distance from the river would make its transfer almost impossible. Far simpler would be the proposal of taking the Luxor obelisk, already given to the English by Mehemet Ali, the sister one to that successfully transported to Paris by the French. It is a thousand pities to leave it where it is, and to miss the occasion of adding so unique and valuable a monument to our art treasures.

The last day of our travellers' stay at Assouan was spent in making a few purchases, visiting the old castle overlooking the river, and exploring the island of Elephantine, which offers beautiful sketching. But the inhabitants are even more importunate, as beggars, than their confraternity at Thebes; and it required all the eloquence of the good priest to prevent their appropriating the contents of the traveller's paint-box. She purchased from them

many strings of bright beads, which constitute their sole idea of female dress.

A curious funeral took place in the evening, an empty boat being carried for the dead man, who was buried with his arms and his spear; while a funeral dirge was sung over him by his tribe. It was the more curious, as being identical with the hieroglyphics of similar scenes in the Tombs of the Kings. Many of the customs of these people are purely pagan: for instance, when an Arab makes his coffee, he pours out the first three cups on the ground, as a libation to the sheik who first invented the beverage.

The slave-trade, though nominally abolished by the Viceroy of Egypt, is carried on vigorously at Assouan. The governor goes through the form of confiscating the cargo and arresting the owners of the ship; but, after a few days, a handsome *baksheesh* on the part of the slaveowner and captain settles the matter; and their live cargo is transported to Cairo, there to be disposed of in the harems, or elsewhere.

To the Catholic traveller in this country, nothing can be more melancholy than the utterly degraded condition of the people, who are really very little removed from the brute creation. Years of ill-usage, hardship, and wrong have ground down the *fellah* to the abject condition of a slave; and the utter extinction of Christianity among them seems

to preclude all hope of their ever rising again. Yet Egypt was once the home of saints. From Alexandria—the seat of all that was most learned and refined, the see of St. Athanasius and St. Alexander, and St. Cyril and St. John the Almoner, and a whole string of holy patriarchs, bishops, and martyrs—up to the very desert of Syene, peopled with anchorites, the whole land teemed with saints. And now, the little handful of Franciscan Fathers, scattered here and there, sowing once more the good seed at the cost of their lives, is all that remains to bear witness to the truth. Earnestly did the good old Franciscan father plead for the prayers of the travellers, that the Spirit of God might once more breathe in the hearts of this people, and bring them out of darkness into His marvellous Light. And then they parted—never more to meet, in all probability, in this world; but each, it may be humbly hoped, labouring for the same end, holding the same faith, clinging to the same hope. 'One ship sails faster—another slower—but they all come to one haven.'

CHAPTER II.

FROM CAIRO TO JERUSALEM.

THE descent of the Nile must always be less interesting than the ascent—not only from the fact of the scenery on the banks having been already seen and explored, but also because the rowing motion is far less agreeable and soothing than the *dolce far niente* gliding along of the *dahabiêh* under sail, or the still more quiet though somewhat monotonous act of 'tracking.' But this little book does not pretend to give an account of the antiquities and curiosities which form the principal charm of a Nile voyage. They have been described, so often and so admirably, by Wilkinson and by Lane, by Mr. Hoskyns and Mrs. Carey, by Miss Beaufort, and by half a dozen other authors, both ancient and modern, that any further account would be worse than useless.

Our party spent their time in drawing or shooting, according to their respective tastes; but the pleasure of one of them was a good deal damped by being stung by a scorpion while sketching in the small alabaster temple adjoining one of the gateways of Karnac, close to the famous Salt Lake

DENDERAH.

—a sting which imprisoned her to the sofa of her *dahabiêh* for the following three weeks, and prevented her sharing with the rest in the enjoyment of visiting Memphis and Abydos, which had been reserved for the homeward voyage, and where the excavations have opened out a mine of fresh interest to the antiquarian.

It was with real sorrow that our travellers, soon after, arrived at Cairo, and had to take leave of the boats, which had been their floating homes for four months; and, still worse, of the crews of each, with whom daily and hourly intercourse had naturally produced a tie and an interest, now to be dissolved for ever. Poor fellows! their lot is a hard one, toiling all the day long under a burning sun; or else, when the boat grounds on a sandbank, standing for hours up to their waists in water on bitter nights, till they are shrammed with cold—with no beds but the hard deck, no covering but their ragged *burnous*, and no food but bread, hard as a rock, which must be soaked in water to be eaten, and with a kind of clover which they 'graze' upon, like cows, on landing! Yet is this lot happiness itself compared to the fate of those who are not engaged by any '*reis*,' or captain, for the Nile voyage, and who are consequently subject to the chances of the much-dreaded conscription. In spite of the oppression and ill-usage of centuries, the Egyptian '*fellahs*' (or peasants) are a light-hearted, cheerful, and patient

race, grateful for the least kindness, and bearing their manifold trials, both mental and physical, with that 'fatalist' Mahometan endurance (*kismet*), which often puts to shame our Christian faith and fortitude.

There were several good singers among the two crews of our travellers' boats: one, especially, was paid by the rest to cheer them in that way while the others toiled; and in spite of the monotony and peculiarity of their low choruses, they are wonderfully sweet and, occasionally, beautifully plaintive in their melody. Their instruments are generally the tambourine or '*tār*,' and a kind of drum, which they call a '*darábukkeh*,' made of either wood or earth, and covered over with fish-skin. They have also a kind of double reed pipe called a '*zummàráh*,' which emits a somewhat harsh and disagreeable sound, rather like a Scotch bagpipe. But the '*Hay-a-lee-sah*,' gently echoed from boat to boat by their respective crews, is, like the *sakeel* or the *shadoof*, one of the most beautiful and characteristic of the Nile sounds, and as grateful to the ear of the lover of Egyptian voyages, as the sheep-bell on the sloping downs to the Wiltshire farmer.

The honesty of these boatmen is proverbial. Your dragoman cheats and robs you without mercy; and, in fact, the one who had accompanied our travellers, although the bearer of a certificate stating that he had previously served with H.R.H. the Prince of

Wales, to whom he had given great satisfaction, was obliged to be brought before the English Consul on their return to Cairo, and threatened with being taken to the Pacha, before he would disgorge a portion of his ill-gotten gains. But the sailors on no single occasion were ever detected in the smallest larceny. Everything was naturally left about the cabins, in the cramped accommodation of a Nile boat, where presses or drawers are almost unknown; but nothing was ever missing.

The brutality of the officials on the banks towards these poor fellows exceeds belief. On one occasion the *dahabiêh* had approached too near a government powder-magazine; and one of the sailors, who had landed to fetch water or milk, was seized by the garrison of the fort, his turban torn off, and himself most cruelly beaten. It required all the 'prestige' of the English name, and the Firman of the Viceroy of Egypt (which our party had fortunately brought with them), to rescue the poor fellow from their savage clutches.

The three weeks spent in Cairo were almost entirely occupied, by the leader of the expedition, in providing the outfit necessary for the future tent-life of the party; and let no one imagine that this is an easy or expeditious matter. Nothing in the East is ever ready-made. If you want tents, you must first go to the bazaar, where the thread is woven; then to the one where the canvas is sold;

then to a third, where the ropes are to be found; then to a fourth, for pegs and poles. It is the same with all your furniture. The metal of your pot or kettle must first be weighed and bought in the Copper Bazaar, and then manufactured, into the shape or article you want, somewhere else. Your mattrass must be made up at home, after a whole day has been spent in haggling for the wool in one place, or for the thread in another; and for the ticking in a third, and for the tassels in a fourth—and so on, *ad infinitum!* Add to this, the natural slowness of an oriental, his indifference to your purchasing *anything* if it should give him the least trouble; the way he leaves you to fish for yourself among his miscellaneous stores, at the back of the seat on which he is squatted, rather than put down his long pipe for a moment, to reach down for you the article of which you may be in search; and last, not least, the quantity of coffee which must be imbibed before any kind of settlement can be arrived at as to price—all this renders 'shopping' in Cairo one of the most wearisome and trying occupations which it is possible to conceive, especially to people in a hurry, as most English travellers generally are.*

* Let no travellers undertake any transaction of this sort in company with their dragoman, unless money be a useless consideration to them. The tradesman is compelled to give these functionaries so large a percentage, that the price of everything to the purchaser is nearly doubled. On first arriving at Cairo, certain '*abbas*' or burnous were bought by the ladies in company with their dragoman. On returning,

At last, thanks to the kindness of an English gentleman long resident in Cairo, Mr. A——, five tents were got together and pitched, on approval, in the square opposite the Hotel. One was a gorgeous affair, sky-blue, with red-and-white devices all over it, looking very like the tent of a travelling wild-beast show. But as it was the only large and roomy one, and was capable of containing the four ladies and their beds and bedding, it was finally decided to keep it, and to make it the drawing-room by day, reserving the more modest ones for the gentlemen of the party, as well as for the servants and the cooking apparatus. Their numbers were so great, with the '*atwal*' or 'tent-pitchers,' and the other necessary camp-followers, that our travellers decided to dispense with chairs and tables—rather to the despair of a rheumatic member of the company!—and to content themselves with squatting on their carpets for their meals in true oriental fashion, and making use of the two wicker-baskets (which were to sling on each side of the mules, and contained the one dress for Sunday allowed to each lady) for dressing and washhand-stands. A cord fastened across the tents at night served as a

two or three more were wanted, and the same bazaar was resorted to; but experience had made them wiser, and they went alone. To their surprise, the price asked for the identical articles was exactly half what they had previously paid; and on expressing their astonishment, the owner simply and straightforwardly gave the reason above mentioned, which they found to be the actual fact.

hanging wardrobe, to prevent their clothes getting wet on the (sometimes) damp ground; some tin jugs and basins, with a smarter set in brass of a beautiful shape (called in Cairo a '*tisht*' and '*ibreek*'), together with a few '*nargeeleh*' pipes for the use of their guests on state occasions, completed their furnishing arrangements. They had brought from their boats a 'Union Jack,' so as to place themselves under the protection of their country's flag, and also an elaborate 'Wyvern,' the fabrication of which, in gorgeous green, with a curly tail, had afforded them great amusement in their start four months before.

This life in tents is a free and charming way of existence, and, except in wet weather, was one of unmixed enjoyment to the whole party. The time spent by the leaders of the expedition in providing these necessary articles, was occupied by the younger ones in buying presents in the bazaars: now struggling through the goldsmiths' quarter (the narrowest in all Cairo), where you buy your gold by the carat, and then have it manufactured before your eyes into whatever form you please; now trying on bright '*kaffirs*,' made of the pure Mecca silk, and generally of brown and yellow shades, with the '*akyal*,' a kind of cord of camel's-hair which binds them round the head; or else the graceful burnous, with their beautifully-blended colours and soft camel's-hair texture; or the many bright-coloured slippers; or, leaving the silk and stuff bazaar, thread-

ing their way through the stalls containing what we should call in England 'curiosities;' and selecting the beautiful little silver filagree or enamel cups called '*zarfs*,' which hold the delicate tiny Dresden ones within—meant to contain that most delicious of all drinks, the genuine Eastern coffee, made without sugar or milk, but as unlike the horrible beverage known by that name in England as can well be imagined!. In the same stalls were to be found beautiful Turkish rosaries, of jasper and agate, or sweet-scented woods, with long-shaped bottles of attar of roses, enamelled '*nargeelehs*' and amber-mouthed pipes, and octagonal little tables made of tortoiseshell inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Leaving these narrow courts, which are as thronged as the 'Passage des Panoramas' at Paris, and brushing by stalls full of oriental costumes and second-hand clothes (gorgeous in colour, but apt to leave unpleasant *animal* reminiscences with their purchasers), they turned into a wider square than the rest, and found themselves unexpectedly in the Carpet Bazaar; and there they had to choose, from among a bewildering mass of beautiful oriental patterns—green, red, blue, and yellow—those charmingly comfortable little rugs, which were to be hereafter, for so many days and nights, the companions of their travels, and their preservative from cold and damp in their distant wanderings.

To those who have not been in the East, it is

difficult to convey an idea of what is there meant by a 'shop.' It is simply a recess in the wall, in front of which is a stone slab called a '*mastabah*,' covered with a carpet, on which the shopman squats and smokes his pipe, with his coffee-cup by his side, and sometimes (should he be of a devout turn of mind) with a manuscript of the Koran, from which he mumbles certain passages. If, as in the narrow goldsmiths' quarter, a camel or donkey should be taking the same road as yourself, you have no alternative and no escape but to mount up hurriedly *on the counter* to get out of the way. It is hard for an Englishman, with some faint ideas of law and justice, and of the 'liberty of the subject,' to reconcile himself to the treatment of the natives by the '*sais*' or groom, who, in a white full-sleeved shirt, red silk waistcoat, bright-coloured sash, bare legs, and red slippers, runs before you to clear the way, and strikes out unmercifully, right and left, on old and young, to ensure you a free passage! But after some experience, and occasionally trying to go without one, the ladies of the party were compelled to own that it was scarcely possible or safe to dispense with his services.

When the charms of the bazaars had been exhausted, their kind and obliging Armenian friend, Hekekeyan Bey (a gentleman well known throughout the East for his literary acquirements and Mez-

zofanti knowledge of languages), would place his dromedary at their disposal: a noble beast, with even and rapid paces, whose refection before a journey used to be a sheep 'roasted whole on a toast' (as the cookery books have it), and stuffed with dates and pistachio-nuts! Or else the party would sit and drink coffee and lemonade in the '*Esbeykieh*,' as the large square is called, round which are clustered the hotels, the consuls' houses, and most of the European residents. The English Consul-General is an exception to the general rule, as he has taken a villa a little outside the town, on the Shoubra Road, the approach to which is by a fine avenue of sycamore-figs, which line the road on each side, and form a very pleasant shelter from the heat of the noonday sun.

Nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy of Sir R. C—— to every one of his countrymen or countrywomen; as well as that of his lamented sister, Mrs. V——, who lived with him and kept his house. His hospitable home was always open to the many stray Englishmen and Englishwomen whom health or fancy had led to those distant shores; and his ready help was never wanting—not only in suggesting many little additional comforts and luxuries on board the boats, but in settling the various difficulties entailed on the stranger, ignorant of both the people and language, by the intrigues and roguery of the

owners of the boats and of the dragomans, who vie with each other in fleecing the luckless Englishman, unless warned by the friendly Consul of their machinations. There are also a great many minutiæ to be attended to in drawing up the contract for the Nile voyage—such as stipulating for the crews to stop only at certain stations to bake, and not infringing the rule of keeping clear of the poop-deck, and the like; which are vital to the comfort of travellers, but which would probably not have occurred to them without the kind thoughtfulness of the Consul-General, who seemed to multiply himself for the assistance of his numerous fellow-countrymen.

Our party were specially indebted to him, among other things, for the loan of a charming Scotch terrier, yclept 'Jack'—a model of his race, and whose taste for *rats* made him invaluable to the occupants of the boats. He escaped all perils by land and by water during his stay with them, but on his return to his master a sad fate befell him. Forgetting the proverb about 'those who in quarrels interpose,' Jack, like many wiser heads than himself, chose to take part in a canine fray at Cairo. The dogs in the East live and hunt in packs, jealously guarding their respective '*quartiers*' from all intruders; so that poor Jack's (no doubt well-meant) interference was resented by both sides; and the end of it was that both sets of combatants fell upon

him, and so mauled and wounded him that he only crawled back to his master's kennel to die!

Whilst the unavoidable delays consequent on oriental habits rather tried the patience of some of our party, they were rewarded, to a certain degree, by becoming acquainted with several native gentlemen and residents in Cairo, from one of whom they obtained some reliable statistics about Egypt, and various characteristic anecdotes of the people.

The cultivated area is six millions of acres only, the rest of the country being desert. The population has dwindled down to about three millions, living in great misery and poverty; and the revenue does not exceed four million pounds sterling. The present Pacha, however, is a man of greater shrewdness in worldly business than his predecessors, and is said to be excessively fond of money. Large grants of land in lieu of pensions had been made by the late Viceroy to well-deserving persons; but the present Pacha, on ascending the throne, resumed 200,000 acres of this land by an act of arbitrary power, which land he cultivates for his own benefit and by forced labour. He has vastly improved this property, and receives from it 400,000*l.* a year, or 2*l.* an acre; but the act in itself has rendered him very unpopular.*

* Every one is bound to bear witness to the present Viceroy's great kindness and courtesy towards the English who are induced by health or other causes to spend the winter in Egypt. He places his boats and his shooting-grounds at their disposal; allows ladies to visit his Harem, and in every way does his utmost to contribute to the comfort and convenience of his guests.

As an instance of the strange sort of way in which justice is administered in this country, the following story is told. A certain French gentleman entrusted an Englishman with 90*l.* to buy a horse for him. The Englishman, accordingly, gave the money to a native, whom he considered thoroughly trustworthy, with orders to go into Arabia and there purchase the animal. The Arab, however, spent most of the money in his own devices, and returned to Cairo, after a few months, with a wretched 'rosinante,' such as would appear at a Spanish bull-fight. The Englishman, immensely disgusted, returned the 90*l.* to his French friend, simply saying that he had failed in executing his commission; but he determined to try and recover it from the Arab. So he went and told the whole matter to the Governor of Cairo, who appointed his deputy as judge. While the case was being tried, dinner-time came; and the judge, the prosecutor, and the prisoner all sat down together, and dined in a friendly way. No embarrassment was caused thereby; but after dinner, the judge, turning to the prisoner, quietly said: 'Can you pay the Frank gentleman the money you owe him?' On receiving a simple reply in the negative, the judge added, 'Then you had better go off at once to prison, and delay this gentleman no longer.' The Arab went without a word, and remained in this miserable place (for the prisons are infamous) for two months, after

which his brother took his place for him. Finally, the money was paid by instalments.

One afternoon our travellers made an expedition to 'Shoubra,' the summer palace and gardens of the Viceroy's Harem. The first time they attempted it, they were turned back (in spite of an important-looking document conveying the necessary permission), and saw likewise a number of labourers driven like a flock of sheep out of the gardens, into which the inmates of the Harem had suddenly and, it seemed, unexpectedly, expressed an intention to walk. 'No one may look on the face of these ladies and live!' was the explanation given by the porter to the enquiry of one of the gentlemen of the party as to the cause of this proceeding. The second time they were more fortunate, and found that the garden was beautifully laid out with flowers and rare exotics; while passion-flowers, ipomæas, and hibiscus crawled over every wall. In the centre is a large cloistered marble court, which surrounds a spacious bath, with jets issuing from the mouths of marble lions at the four corners. The gardener is a Scotchman, and justifies the wisdom of the Viceroy's choice. He kindly showed our travellers over the whole place, giving them beautiful nosegays on parting, and supplying them with flowers in Cairo during the whole time of their stay. The wilder portions of the garden are like those of St. Elmo, the Duc de Montpensier's charming palace at Seville;

and have been converted, like his, into a kind of '*Jardin des Plantes*,' full of strange and curious birds and beasts.

The drive home, through the avenues which line the Shoubra Road, was quite beautiful; the setting sun lighting up the banks of the Nile, and throwing gorgeous tints on the distant Pyramids, and exquisite reflections from the white and tawny sails of the *dahabiêhs* on the glistening waters below. Before returning home, they went once more to 'Boulak,' that wonderfully busy scene of embarkation and disembarkation, and of noisy Arab vociferation; where, at night and in the early morning, you literally walk on hundreds of human bodies, sleeping *au clair de la lune*, rolled up in their burnous, and apparently unconscious of and indifferent to your passage. Preziosi, that wonderful Eastern painter, has given a charming and lifelike representation of this spot and scene under the glow of an Eastern setting sun.

Owing to the delicate health of one of the party, and the failure of an arrangement entered into with the Consul-General to proceed by water to Tor, on the Red Sea, where camels were to meet them for the expedition to Mount Sinai, the plan of going to Syria by the long desert was reluctantly given up; and it was judged more prudent to proceed to Palestine by the far less interesting route of Alexandria and Jaffa. Bidding a sorrowful 'good-bye,' therefore,

to beautiful Cairo, which it would take a twelvemonth thoroughly to know and enjoy, our travellers started once more by rail for Alexandria, to take ship the following morning for the Holy Land. This time they had learned wisdom by experience, and taken pains to ascertain exactly the cost of their journey, and of the transmission of their baggage; for, unless some such arrangements be made beforehand, the sum charged on that line is perfectly exorbitant, and depends, apparently, on the individual caprice of the station-master for the time being. Both our travellers and Lord S—— had been made to pay 50*l.* each for their luggage on arriving at Cairo, about treble the cost of conveying the said boxes the whole way from England to Alexandria!*

Still lame, and suffering from her old Karnac sting, one of the ladies sought the kind care and skill of the St. Vincent de Paul Sisters at Alex-

* The merchants at Cairo are now making a complaint and agitation, as the Pacha will not allow them to make use of the railroad to carry their cotton to the Alexandrian market, till he has sent down his own crops and sold them at a high premium. This is one of the many inconveniences arising from the railway being the Pacha's private property. It is frightfully mismanaged, and as the officials are continually (almost weekly) changed, their only chance of making a little profit is by cheating the passengers while they have the opportunity.

Whenever the Pacha or any of his family wish to travel, the ordinary trains are stopped. Formerly, also, the Pacha's special train used to wait a couple of hours *en route*, for him to take his afternoon siesta, and then the whole traffic was, of course, delayed. But an accident which occurred not long ago, when the proper signals had been omitted, and his carriage was on the point of being run into by the ordinary passenger-train, frightened him into some consideration for the safety and convenience of others.

andria, whose hard-won experience in Eastern ailings renders them invaluable in suggesting the proper remedies. Fever and cholera had thinned their ranks since the English lady's previous visit to the community; but this was announced to her with thankfulness and joy rather than with any other feeling—a few more martyrs of charity had gone home. A beautiful Benediction Service, in the midst of their joyous band of little ones, and a few loving words at parting, are the last recollections in the heart of the traveller of those loving sisters. Yes, *the last* on earth; for the cholera returned the following spring with redoubled violence, and those she had known and loved best among those 'white cornettes' went then to receive their reward.

The next morning saw our travellers fairly embarked on board the 'Danube' (French steamer) for Jaffa—a charming boat, but with a somewhat grumpy captain, a regular *vieux loup de mer*, who was out of humour because of the number of religious on board, which he seemed to think would bring him bad luck. Among their fellow-passengers were the 'Custode dei Santi Luoghi,' to whom the English lady joyfully presented her letter of introduction from His Eminence Cardinal Cullen, which at once ensured her a kind and courteous reception; and the Bishop Mastajo of Central Africa, who had *walked* for two months through his Abys-

sinian diocese to Aden, so that he might, in spite of his great age, see, before he died, the actual spots hallowed by the steps of Our Divine Lord.

It was on March 1 (St. David's Day) that our travellers first set foot on what is so emphatically and rightly called the 'Holy Land.'* The landing at Jaffa is very dangerous. There is no harbour, and only one narrow entrance between two low rocks, on which the surf, even in calm weather, beats heavily. In bad weather, landing is simply impossible, and some English ladies who had preceded our party, were hurried on, *nolens volens*, to Beyrout. The town itself is beautifully situated on a rising ground surrounded with orchards of oranges, lemons, and citrons, the largest in the known world. It was literally impossible to carry more than one at a time in one's bag or pocket.

The kind 'Custode dei Santi Luoghi' insisted on conveying the whole party straight from the steamer to his fine Franciscan convent near the landing-stairs, where dinner and rooms were at

* The author of the *Guida del Pellegrino Divoto in Terra Santa* touchingly says: 'La qual terra meritamente chiamiamo "Santa," nella quale non vi è passo di piede che non sia stato illustrato e santificato dal Corpo o dall' Ombra del Salvatore, o dalla gloriosa presenza della Sua Divina Madre, o dalla compagnia degli Apostoli, o dal Sangue che vi versarono a rivi i Santi Martiri. O! Terra veramente Santa! e degna di essere calcata, non solamente senza calze ai piedi, ma molto più ancora senza colpe mortali nell' anima e senza affetti terreni nel cuore. Solve, adunque (come già disse Iddio a Mosè), "Solve calceamentum de pedibus tuis: locus enim in quo stas Terra Sancta est."'

once provided for them. The ladies took the opportunity to exchange their gowns for riding-habits, while the gentlemen went to the Consul, who was kindly superintending the packing of the baggage-mules and the saddling of the horses, which had been previously ordered from Cairo. A delay, however, occurred from the Pacha having suddenly appropriated four out of the eight saddle-horses selected for the party, for the use of his Harem that morning. The owners had no redress, and nothing left for it but to wait till his Highness had done with them; while our travellers consoled themselves by visiting the different objects of interest in the town.

The sacred memories of Jaffa date back to remote antiquity. Here the Lebanon cedars were landed for the construction of the Temple. Here Jonah embarked when shrinking from his Ninevite mission. Here St. Peter had the mysterious vision of the sheet let down from heaven full of 'clean and unclean'—to teach him more fully the new law of Him who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Here also he restored Tabitha to life—a miracle doubtless wrought to confirm the faith of the people, though (according to the Jewish legend) so full of mysterious suffering to herself. Here, again, he received the messengers of Cornelius, inviting him to Cæsarea. The house of 'Simon the Tanner' is still shown by the seaside, part of

it being now converted into a chapel; and the well is used by the tanners of this day for the same purpose. Here also the Blessed Virgin is said to have embarked with St. John for Ephesus, after the death of her Divine Son. Here again, in what may be called modern history, St. Louis of France remained for some months while preparing for the conquest of Jerusalem; and here the First Napoleon, in 1799, disgraced himself and the French nation, whom he represented, by the massacre of his Moslem prisoners, after they had surrendered on the faith of his word that their lives should be spared.

With the exception of one or two granite columns, there are very few remains of antiquity in Jaffa; so our party went on to the English Consul's house, which is close to the *one* gate of the city, and to a fountain remarkable for its quaint carving and curious Arabic inscriptions. Here they were kindly and hospitably entertained by the Consul and his young Greek wife, until the Pacha, at last, condescended to send them back their horses; when the whole party mounted, and fairly started on their Holy Land pilgrimage. The son of the Consul kindly volunteered to act as their guide and interpreter, at any rate till their arrival in Jerusalem—a proposal very gratefully accepted.

The road to Ramleh wound through a lovely and fertile country, lined with hedges of orange and prickly-pear; and the luxuriant verdure was very

grateful to eyes so long parched by the glare and drought of the Egyptian sandhills. But their start had been so long delayed, that it was night before they had gone halfway to their destination, and it became rather nervous work for the less-experienced riders of the party to pick their way along the stony rough tracks in pitchy darkness. The instinct of their horses, however, seconded the efforts of their guides, and at nine o'clock in the evening they found themselves safely at the door of the hospitable Franciscan convent, with its welcome and beautiful sign of Christ's love on the doorway—the crossed and pierced hands. Here, however, a little disappointment awaited them. The 'Custode dei Santi Luoghi' had despatched a messenger from Jaffa as soon as they landed, desiring the Ramleh monks to prepare an evening meal for our travellers, irrespective of the Lenten fast. Some other English people, however, hearing of the difficulty about the horses at Jaffa, took it for granted that the party would delay their arrival till the following day, and therefore informed the monks that they were not coming that evening—and, what was worse, ate up their dinner! However, the kind hospitality of the Franciscans being inexhaustible, in about half an hour a fresh meal was prepared; after which our travellers retired to their cells, and slept for the first time on holy ground.

The next morning found some of the party early

in the Convent Church of St. Nicodemus. Tradition affirms that that disciple 'who visited Our Lord by night' lived for a long time afterwards at Ramleh. Afterwards they visited the Church of St. John (now a mosque), and that of the 'Forty Martyrs of Sebaste,' which is but a heap of ruins. St. Jerome affirms that Ramleh was the home of Joseph of Arimathæa—he who had the signal honour of obtaining the sacred body of Our Lord from the hands of Pontius Pilate. It is also certain that this was the first town occupied by the Crusaders on their way to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels. To the south of the city is a very ancient well, still bearing the name of St. Helena. To the north is the Saracenic tower of the 'Forty Martyrs,' and the ruins of a convent of Knights Templars, whose business was to escort the pilgrims to the Holy City. The view from the tower is magnificent, overlooking the whole plain bounded by the Mediterranean on one side, and the mountains of Israel on the other.

After exploring fully the antiquities of Ramleh, our travellers breakfasted; and then, taking leave of the good Franciscan Fathers, started for Lydda—as they had decided to make a *détour* by Bethhoron and Gibeon before reaching Jerusalem, which they thought would be more interesting than the direct road. Lydda is the 'Lod' of the Old Testament,

situated, like Ramleh, in a fertile plain, and surrounded with olive and orange groves. It was the scene of St. Peter's miracle of curing Æneas, the man 'sick of the palsy;' and is also interesting to English people as the birthplace of their patron saint, St. George, who suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia under Diocletian at the close of the third century. His body was conveyed by the Christians to his native town, and a church erected in his honour by Justinian. This church was razed to the ground by the Moslems on the approach of the Crusaders, but was afterwards rebuilt by Richard Cœur-de-Lion. It is one of the most picturesque ruins in the Holy Land. The walls and part of the east end remain, with beautiful clustered marble columns and fine capitals. The day was delicious, like an English summer morning, and the bridle-path was both wild and beautiful, and covered with spring flowers, among which our travellers gathered quantities of cyclamen, scarlet anemones, pink phlox, blue anagallis, lilac and white cistus, and a variety of orchids.

Towards evening, a steep and precipitous ascent led them to the rocky ridge of Bethhoron, a site chiefly interesting from its connection with the great victory won by Joshua over the Ammonites, when the Sun and Moon stood still at his bidding. The view from the top of the sheik's house is very fine, and some of the party remained sketching on the flat

roof till the gorgeous sunset had faded, without twilight warning, into sudden night.

This was our travellers' first experience of a night in the tents. Of course, everything was new and strange, and it took some little time to get reconciled to the stony and uneven ground, on which their feet were bruised and wounded; as well as to the absence of seats or ordinary comforts. Many little things also were wanting, which their ignorance at Cairo in the whole matter of tent-life had made them overlook; but these were supplied at Jerusalem. Unfortunately, during that very first night, a violent storm came on, which, about two o'clock in the morning, threatened not only to deluge the tents, but, from the violence of the wind, to blow them down altogether; while the pouring rain drenched the new canvas through-and-through, and woke some of the party very unpleasantly, by the water dripping on their faces in bed, or, rather, coming down like a shower-bath.

Compelled to get up and put on their damp clothes in haste, our travellers remounted, and, following the line of the old Roman road, came upon Gibeon, now called 'El-Jib,'—a village standing on the top of a hill, steep and difficult of access, the houses being built on a succession of ledges. This is all that remains of one of the great 'royal cities' of Scripture. Beneath is stretched one of the most fertile plains in all Palestine, covered with vineyards

and olive-groves. Wherever the hillsides are not too steep, fruit-trees (especially apricot and fig) and vines are planted—the terraced ledges reminding one of the equally careful cultivation of the Corniche. It was impossible not to remember Solomon's sojourn here, and his sacrifice of a 'thousand burnt-offerings' when God gave him 'the desire of his heart,' wisdom and understanding, and to pray for a like desire and a like blessing.

From Gibeon a bad road brought them to Mizpeh (the name signifying 'a place of look-out'), called by the natives 'Neby Samwil.' The hill on which it stands is the great landmark of the country, rising 600 feet above the plains of Gibeon. On the crest of the hill stands a mosque with a minaret, seen from all the country round, which was once the beautiful convent church of the Crusaders. It was here that Richard Cœur-de-Lion, having advanced from his camp at Ajalon, first caught sight of Jerusalem, and, falling on his knees, exclaimed: 'O Lord God! I pray that I may never see Thy holy city if I may not rescue it from the hands of Thine enemies.' It was here, too, that in the days of Samuel, the Israelites, in spite of the warnings of the Prophet, rejected God as their King, and chose to have 'a ruler like other nations.'* The east end of the

* See the wonderfully clever parallel between the Israelites and the Romans of the present day, in a Sermon preached by Dr. Newman on the 7th October, 1866, and published by Longman, under the title of '*The Pope and the Revolution.*'

church alone remains, and out of the ruins of the adjoining convent several houses have been built, the walls being hewn out of the rock. From the flat roof of this ruined church the view extends over the whole of the South of Palestine.

A stony, steep path conducted our travellers from hence to the Valley of Hanina, where all pretence of a decent road ended. Sharp and pointed stones alternated with slippery slabs, on which their poor horses slipped and stumbled incessantly—the heavy rain, of course, adding to the difficulty. On reaching the summit of the next rising ground, their guides pointed out to them a succession of bluish-grey hills, and a long low line of wall surmounted by a dome, which stood out against the sky.

'*Ecco Gerusalemme!*' Instinctively everyone drew their bridle-rein and paused. The country round was of a totally different character from what they had passed through in the morning. It was desert, arid, silent, and solitary. Only one or two pilgrims were wending their way, like our travellers, to the Holy City. Otherwise the eye rested on no living thing. It seemed meet that thus it should be —that, in face of Calvary, nature itself should stand still.* Mournful and yet beautiful, to the Christian

* The following description of the first sight of Jerusalem, by a living author, is too beautiful and true not to be quoted:—

'On the first sight of Jerusalem, there is a thrill of interest which is scarcely weakened by repetition; and one can only pity the man who is not, for the moment at least, imbued with the pilgrim spirit and

heart as to the Jewish, must Jerusalem ever be, until the time of the 'restitution of all things.' And even then, will it ever be possible to blot out the remembrance of the Passion from the minds of angels or of men?

But the day was inauspicious. Most of the party were wet through, and so, giving up the luxury of dwelling on thoughts like these, they pushed on (as fast as the nature of the ground would admit) to the Damascus Gate, which is on the north side of the city, in the centre of the valley between the two ridges on which Jerusalem stands. Passing under its battlemented arch, a steep street led them across the city up to the 'Casa Nuova,' the hospitable Pilgrims' Home attached to the great Latin convent of 'St. Salvador.'

All the sacred places in Palestine are under the care of these Franciscan monks, who are styled '*Fratres minores ab observantia.*' St. Francis himself applied to the Sultan for permission to guard the Holy Places, which, after many difficulties, was granted to him and to his Order in perpetuity.

does not feel the sight to be one of the privileges of his life. Enshrined in the depths of a Christian's affections, linked with every feeling of faith and hope—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." . . . We gazed in silence. The one thought, "This is Jerusalem," absorbed all others. "Thy servants take pleasure in her stones." It is like revisiting a father's grave or the home of one's youth; and no one is disposed to expatiate on the outlines or details of the landscape, which rivets itself on the soul with magnetic power, for over it hover the memories of Redemption achieved and victory over the grave.'—*The Land of Israel; by H. B. Tristram.*

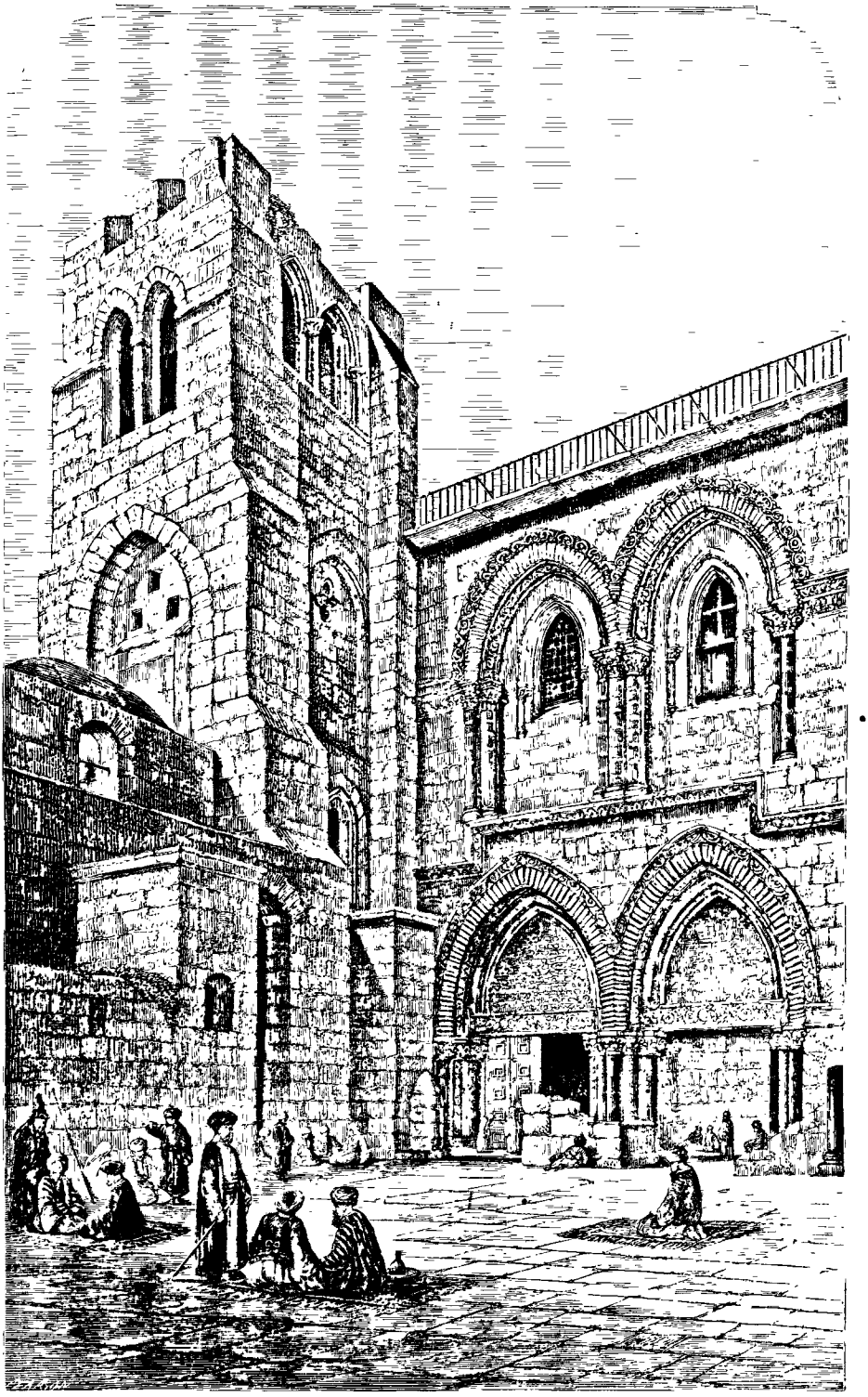
Ever since (that is, for more than six centuries) they have maintained their ground, in the midst of hardships, sufferings, and trials of all kinds. Their work has prospered in an almost miraculous manner; and although many have reaped the crown of martyrdom, yet have there been ever fresh soldiers ready to fill up the gap. The '*guardiano*' or custode of the whole resides at Jerusalem. He is always an Italian, and is elected every three years. There are 14 convents subject to him in the Holy Land, and about 150 monks.

It is impossible to speak highly enough of their kindness and consideration towards all travellers, no matter of what race or faith, who knock at their hospitable gates. On this occasion, the dripping party were received with open arms; and as their baggage was still a long way behind, the kind monks insisted upon their taking off their wet clothes, and going to bed till dry things could be procured for them; while they brought them hot mulled wine, steaming and delicious coffee, and every sort of preservative against cold. In the evening they had an interview with the 'custode,' who put them under the care of the English confessor of the convent, Padre Luigi, as their cicerone in visiting the sacred sites,* and also their guide as

* In speaking of these sites, the writer must be excused from entering into the perplexing controversies regarding the authority and authenticity of each, which seem to occupy the minds of most English travellers in the Holy Land. She went there as a Catholic pilgrim,

to all matters relating to the hours of service and the regulations of the convent; and then they gladly sought the rest they so much needed, and slept for the first time within the walls of the Holy City.

and gladly accepted the Latin view of these disputed questions, which are, after all, irrelevant to the one great fact, that here Our Blessed Lord lived and died, was buried, and rose again.



HOLY SEPULCHRE.

CHAPTER III.

JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

It was long before the four-o'clock bell summoned the inmates of the convent to their place in the choir the following morning, that Padre Luigi, with a little lantern, knocked at the door of the cell of one of the party, to take her, according to promise, to pay her first visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Descending the steep and rugged street into a bazaar, and then again by a flight of ten or twelve steps, you come into a little paved square piazza or court. To the left is a building belonging to the Greek convent; to the right is a detached chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; while to the north, the eye rests on a fine massive tower, and on a double-pointed arched doorway, leading into that wonderful aggregation of chapels called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the little square in front of the church, groups of itinerant vendors of shells, beads, and pictures squat all day on their carpets, and drive a flourishing trade.

The Turks, for some reason only known to themselves, had fixed on three o'clock that morning

as the hour when they would condescend to open the sacred building. On entering, the first thing which meets the eye is the 'Stone of Unction,' *i.e.*, the stone on which the Body of Our Lord was laid, after death, for the anointing. From thence, turning to the left, you come to a circular building like the Pantheon at Rome, in the centre of which is the Holy Sepulchre. The entrance is by a low door, which leads into what is called the 'Chapel of the Angel,' for here the Angel sat upon the stone which had been rolled away from the Sepulchre. In the centre of this octagonal chapel is the stone itself; and at the west end of this antechamber is a little door, through which, stooping very low, you pass, and find yourself within the Holy Sepulchre. It is like a little vault with a domed roof. To the right is the Sepulchre itself, raised nearly three feet above the floor, and of pure white marble. The slab which covers it serves as an altar, on which the Holy Sacrifice is daily offered. The space is so small that there is only room for the officiating priest and a server; while those who intend to communicate kneel in the outer chapel, and then crawl in, almost on hands and knees, one by one. Over the Sepulchre burn forty-two silver lamps, day and night; while the air is heavy with incense, and the floor is strewn with the sweet-smelling flowers of the mimosa and orange-blossoms. A priest is always watching in

adoration by the shrine; and all day long, a continual stream of pilgrims, taking off their shoes at the entrance, bow knees and forehead before the marble slab where their Lord was laid. In fact, it is only those who pass the night within the sacred building who can ever have the comfort of praying there in stillness and in peace, and without being compelled every moment to make way for a fresh worshipper. But, even with this great drawback, it is difficult to describe the feelings of a person while kneeling there.

Behind the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, is the Oratory of the Copts; and a little beyond, the Chapel of the Syrians, which is like a grotto hewn out of the rock. Passing onwards, and turning round a pier to the left, you come to the Chapel of the 'Apparition,' so called because it is built on the site of the house to which the Blessed Virgin is said (by tradition) to have retired when the Crucifixion was over, and where Our Saviour appeared to her after His Resurrection. It is a quadrangular building, belonging exclusively to the Franciscans; and to the south side of the altar, is a large porphyry fragment of the Column of the Flagellation.

Here the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem are still invested, as in olden times: kneeling before the Superior, they take their solemn oath, and are girt with the spurs and sword of Godfrey de Bouillon, which are religiously preserved in the Treasury of the Church. There are many sad and touching recollec-

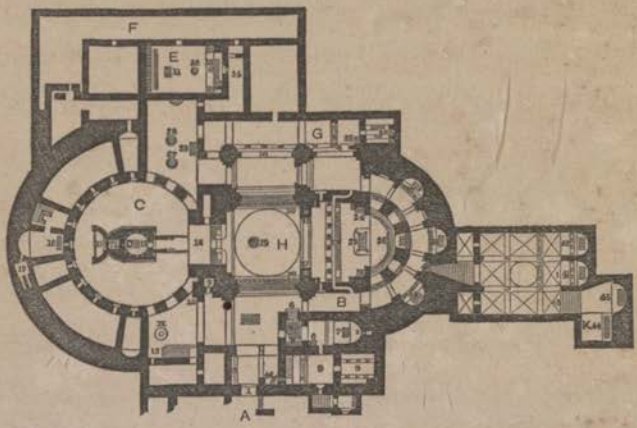
tions connected with these Knights of St. John, and with the Latin Kings who so heroically struggled, for a hundred years, to save from infidel hands the site of their Master's Passion. Each of these Christian Kings was crowned at the altar of this chapel; and then, humbly ascending the steps, each deposited his crown on the altar of Calvary—refusing, like their great leader, to wear the diadem in the city where their Saviour had worn a Crown of Thorns.

Leaving this chapel, and passing by one dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene (built over the supposed spot where Christ appeared to her in the garden), you descend, by two steps, to a low dark chamber hewn out of the rock, which, by a tradition as old as the twelfth century, goes by the name of 'Our Lord's Prison,' as being the place where He was confined previous to His Crucifixion. From thence a side-door leads into the Greek Church, which is directly in front of the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre.* To understand the singular form and arrangements of this church, it is necessary to recollect that, when built by the Crusaders, it was intended only for the Catholics (here called 'Latins'), and given in charge of the Agustinians. When the Crusaders were expelled by Saladin, the Greeks got possession of a portion of the building, and have ever since retained it.

This chapel, which was originally the Latin choir,

* By the kindness of Monsignor Eyre, the writer is allowed to insert, on the opposite page, a copy of his carefully-detailed ground-plan of this church.

is divided in half by an elaborately-carved screen, which cuts off the apse in which stands the High



1. Principal door
2. Place for Turkish Guards
3. Stone of Unction
4. Tomb of Godfrey
5. Tomb of Baldwin
6. Steps to Calvary

Overhead in the Chapel of Calvary:—

7. Chapel of the planting of the Cross
8. Rent of the Rock
9. Chapel of the Crucifixion
7. Chapel of Adam and of John Baptist
8. Tomb of Adam
9. Greek Refectory
10. Small Vestry
11. Place where Virgin Mary stood while the body was anointed
12. Stairway to Armenian Chapel and Lodgings
13. Chapel of the Angel
14. The Holy Sepulchre
15. Altar of the Copts
16. Chapel of the Syrians
17. Tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus
18. Latin choir for the offices of the Holy Sepulchre
19. Greek 'Centre of the World'
20. Monks' Stalls
21, 22. Greek Patriarch's Seat
23. Place of the Painting
24. Table of Prothesis
25. Holy Table
26. Great Throne of Greek Patriarch
27. Where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene as the Gardener
28. Where Mary Magdalene stood
29. Altar of Franks
30. Part of the Pillar of the Flagellation
31. Church of the Latins
32. Where Christ appeared to His Mother after Resurrection
33. Place of recognition of the Cross
34. Latin Sacristy
35. Prison of Our Lord
36. Chapel of the Virgin
37. Chapel of Longinus the Centurion
38. Chapel of Parting the Garments
39. Chapel of the Mocking
40. Stairs in solid rock, going down forty-nine steps
41. Chapel of St. Helena
42. Chapel of Penitent Thief
43. Thirteen steps down in the rock
44. Place where True Cross was found
45. Altar of the Discovery of Cross
46. Latin and Greeks' Stairs to Calvary, which is over the figures 7, 8, 9

The great divisions of the Church are as follows:—

A. Entrance and Portico
B. South Aisle
C. Circular nave under Dome
D. Chapel enclosing the Holy Sepulchre
E. Chapel of the Apparition, which is the Latin Church
F. Franciscan Convent
G. North Aisle
H. Greek Choir
I. Chapel of St. Helena
K. Chapel of the Discovery of the Cross

Altar and the Patriarch's throne. The choral stalls still remain on each side of the Bishop's chair. Beneath the centre of the lantern and clerestory is a short marble column, which is said to mark the centre of the earth. The whole is gorgeously decorated, gilt, and illuminated with ostrich-egg lamps, and paintings of saints on a gold ground.

Leaving the Greek church, and passing by the chapel where it is said the raiment of Our Lord was divided among the soldiers, and that of St. Longinus, the centurion whose spear pierced His sacred side, a flight of thirty steps leads down to the Church of St. Helena, with a cupola roof in which four lights are pierced. It is a massive and beautiful crypt, supported on thick dwarf columns, with basket-worked capitals of a Byzantine character—the whole looking as if untouched since the days of the Great Empress.* To the south of her altar is a marble chair, in which she is said to have sat while superintending the excavations which led to the discovery of the True Cross.

A staircase of twelve steps, hewn in the rock, leads down from hence to the Chapel of the 'Discovery of the Cross.' In a recess on the south side stands an altar and crucifix, on the identical spot where the True Cross lay, dishonoured and unknown, for

* This chapel is admirably rendered in Carl Werner's beautiful picture, which has become so well-known by chromo-lithography to the British public; and also in Roberts's faithful sketch.

three centuries. The rude rock remains uncovered, and unadorned, with the marks of the pickaxe, as if the workmen had only just left off their search; so that this part of the sacred building has a look of greater reality and antiquity than all the rest.

Reascending to the principal aisle, and leaving on the left the 'Chapel of the Mocking'—where the fragment of marble is still shown on which Our Lord is said to have been placed when they crowned Him with thorns, blindfolded Him, and smote Him on the face—a flight of eighteen steps leads upwards to the Chapel of Calvary. It is a low vaulted building, with a marble floor, divided into two chapels; the one to the left belongs to the Greeks. In the centre is the altar, and under it a hole communicating with a similar one in the natural rock below. Here the Saviour's Cross was fixed in the ground. A little to the right, the rent and riven rock is still seen, occasioned by the earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion.

The chapel to the right is that of the Latins, and covers the spot where Our Blessed Lord was nailed to the Cross. In the south wall is a window looking into a small exterior chapel, dedicated to 'Our Lady of Sorrows,' for here is said to be the exact spot where the Virgin stood beside the Cross. Underneath this Latin chapel is what is supposed to be the grave of Adam; and at the entrance of the dark and gloomy chamber are the tombs of Godfrey de

Bouillon (the first Latin King of Jerusalem) and of his brother Baldwin. On the former, though much defaced, is the following inscription :—

> Hic jacet inclytus Dux Godfridus de Bulion,
> Qui totam istam Terram acquisivit Cultui Christiano:
> Cujus Anima regnat cum Christo. Amen.

All this, and more than this, was shown that morning to the early visitor at the shrine; and then they went back to have their mass on Calvary. Pilgrims of every race and clime, speaking a perfect Babel of tongues, clothed in the many and varied costumes of their respective countries, all were kneeling there—on the terrible spot which witnessed the awful Passion of their common Lord. They had all been seen and known to Him in that dread hour—no single soul had been forgotten in that multitude! His Precious Blood had been offered and accepted for each and all: and the intensity of feeling which such thoughts called forth was shown in the bated breath and the awestruck, weeping faces which gathered round that altar in the dim twilight, to feed on the Body which had been there pierced and torn and mangled for them.

Returning at six o'clock to the convent, the priest and the lady passed into the Church of St. Salvador, which adjoins it, and which contains a beautiful silver altar-front, and several other precious fittings; but the thoughts of the English stranger were too absorbed in the recollections of

the early morning at the Sepulchre to take interest in other things that day.

In the afternoon one of the party went to present her letters of introduction to the Patriarch, Monsignor de Vallerga,* who received her with the greatest kindness, as indeed he does everyone who claims his help. He is a man of singular ability and knowledge, and is likewise a wonderful linguist, speaking not only Hebrew and Greek, but most of the Arabian dialects; and by his firmness and energy has done a great deal to strengthen the position of the Catholics in the East. He has established a large seminary for priests at Beit Jâla, near Bethlehem, which he watches over with parental care; and has likewise imported the Sisters of St. Joseph, who have an orphanage and day-schools, which are admirably conducted. The Patriarch himself was at one time a missionary among the Kurds, by whom he was taken prisoner, and from whom he received wounds which he suffers from to this day. He is a remarkably handsome man, with all the vigour of youth, though long past middle age.

From the Patriarch's palace, Padre Luigi took our party to see the convent of the 'Filles de Sion,' founded by the famous Jewish convert, the Père de Ratisbon, about eight years ago. Unfortunately, he was himself absent at Paris; but the charming

* Whilst this sheet was passing through the press the melancholy intelligence was received by the writer, that this kind and venerable man had passed to his eternal rest.

Mother Superior, on reading the letter of introduction which one of the party had brought, at once volunteered to show them over the whole house. It adjoins the house of Pontius Pilate, and contains the arch from the window of which Our Saviour was shown to the Jews by him. 'Ecce Homo!'—Carl Werner's admirable drawing, faithfully rendered in chromo-lithography—gives the best possible representation of this spot. In digging the foundations of their new chapel not long ago, a subterranean passage was discovered, of hewn stone, in perfect preservation, and which leads under the city to the Temple. From the terrace of this house, one of the best and most beautiful views of Jerusalem may be obtained. The sisters have about thirty orphans, whom they board, clothe, and lodge; and a branch country-house, on the site of the 'Visitation,' for those among the children who suffer from the climate of Jerusalem.

After promising to return to these kind sisters, our travellers proceeded to the 'Place of Wailing' of the Jews, who assemble every Friday, to weep and pray for restoration to their own country. Here alone the Jews are permitted to approach the walls of their Temple, which they literally bathe with their tears. It is the most touching scene possible, from its intense *reality*; and it would be as inhuman to go to it as a mere *sight*, as it would be to pay a visit of curiosity to a house of mourning which death

had just visited. Jews of every age and country, and of both sexes, were there, leaning their heads against the sacred walls—now repeating verses of the Psalms, now sobbing as if their hearts would break! The stones are large, bevelled, and perfect, except where they have been literally worn away by the kisses of the mourners. A beautiful processional service in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre closed a day so full of thrilling and overpowering interest to the whole party.

The following morning, passing out of St. Stephen's Gate, our travellers rode down the steep and precipitous path, over the bridge which spans the Brook Kedron, to a low building standing on the left of the path at the bottom of the valley. This is the church built over the tomb of the Blessed Virgin. A short flight of steps leads to a paved court and to a Gothic doorway, deeply recessed in the thickness of the grey stone wall. Descending again by a broad staircase of fifty or sixty steps, you come to a dark and gloomy grotto hewn out of the rock. On the east side is a little chapel, still more dark, containing an altar and the empty tomb. A multitude of ostrich-egg lamps, suspended from the roof, throws a gleam of light across this white marble sarcophagus, decked with roses by the loving hands and hearts of the 'Children of Mary,' and reminding one of the famous picture of that subject in the Vatican.

The Mahometans have also a species of altar in

this subterranean church, where solemn services are performed by them in honour of the '*Sitt Miriam*,' as they call the Virgin Mary. On the right and left of the staircase are likewise the tombs of St. Joseph, St. Joachim, and St. Anna. A little beyond this building is the 'Grotto of the Agony,' a cave of some depth, where Our Lord, after leaving His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, withdrew Himself 'a little farther' and prayed. On the very spot of the Agony is an altar, and close to it the terrible inscription—'Hic factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.' Future services in that chapel, especially on the night of the Betrayal, fixed the memory of that awful spot indelibly on the mind of one of the travellers.*

About a 'stone's cast' from this grotto is the Garden of Gethsemane, enclosed by a high wall, under the guardianship of one of the Spanish Franciscan monks. Eight venerable olive-trees remain; but, unfortunately, such has been the indiscretion of pilgrims, and their anxiety to carry off a portion of the sacred wood, that each tree is now enclosed in a high white railing, which very much spoils the effect of the whole, and gives the

* St. Jerome says that what Our Lord suffered on that Thursday night will not all be known until the Doom, when the Father will reveal it, according to the prophecy of Nahum: 'Revelabo cunctis regibus et gentibus ignominiam tuam.' And St. Bernardine: 'That it was the strife between the natural fear of His human nature and the Divine Love urging Him on to the perfect Sacrifice with all the powers of His Soul, which caused the Bloody Sweat.'

garden a villa kind of look, inexpressibly painful to those who would have wished to see it in its original state, and to have knelt by those gnarled roots in stillness and in peace. There is a '*via crucis*' in Spanish tiles or '*azulejos*' let into the wall which encloses the garden, and bright flowers grow in profusion in the little beds between the trees. Afterwards, one of the party became quite at home in that sacred spot; and the old monk would insist on giving her a cup of chocolate in his little garden-cell, when she had been to the early services in the grotto. But the first impression of the place was one of great disappointment, although the necessity for the present incongruous arrangement became more and more apparent every day: the pilgrims come *in hundreds*, and literally take the place by storm.

Leaving Gethsemane, and crossing once more the dried-up Brook of Kedron, our travellers rode up the steep path which leads to the Mount of Olives. The tradition which points to this spot as the one from which Our Lord ascended into Heaven is the oldest and best-authenticated on record. The church built over it, by the piety of St. Helena, has now been converted into a mosque, a nude modern octagonal room, shown by a dervish; but in the centre, deeply imprinted in the rock, is the mark of the Saviour's Foot, venerated equally by Moslem and Christian. The view from the tower at the top is magnificent. The whole city, mournful in her deso-

lation, is stretched out as in a map on the one side, and on the other, Bethany, and the Dead Sea, and the Jordan, and the mountains of Moab; it was difficult to tear oneself from the spot. A large number of ravens make their home amidst the broken columns and ruins of the old church, and perch and croak amid the stunted olive-trees which clothe the sides of the hill. A little lower down is the Hermitage of St. Pelagia, that famous penitent of Antioch, who after her conversion, with the love of a second Magdalene, passed the remainder of her life here in penance and in prayer.*

Returning down the hill on the opposite side, our travellers crossed the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and came to the three remarkable tombs entitled of Zacharias, Absalom, and St. James; which, situated in the deep narrow glen at the bottom of the valley, form, as it were, the corner of an angle, from whence you can either ascend by a steep incline to the city-walls, or follow the path in the valley, which turns sharply to the left, by the village of Siloam to the Valley of Hinnom. The Tomb of Zacharias is an ugly square building, with Ionic columns, said to have been erected over the body of him whom Our Lord speaks of as 'slain between the Temple and the Altar.' But, whatever may be its origin,

* There are no vestiges left of the convent of St. Melania, mentioned by St. Jerome as being only at a short distance from the Church of the Ascension.

it is greatly venerated by the Jews, who come from the uttermost parts of the earth to be buried as close to it as possible. The whole hillside is covered with little flat slabs, commemorating a Jewish restingplace. The Tomb of Absalom is a most curious pyramidal structure, of every jumble of architecture, in the lower part of which is a small chamber; but it is choked with stones, the Jews having been in the habit, from time immemorial, of casting a stone and spitting at the monument as they pass by, to express their horror at Absalom's unnatural rebellion. The Tomb of St. James is a large chamber on the side of the cliff, with a porch supported by Doric columns, and a door and staircase leading to the rock overhead. It is said that here the Apostles took refuge during the interval which elapsed between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Reserving a visit to Siloam for a future day, our travellers rode up the steep path which led to the city-walls, and, making the circuit of the whole town, re-entered Jerusalem by the Jaffa Gate. On their way they passed by the magnificent hospital built by Sir Moses Montefiore for the poor Jews. Nothing can be more abject and miserable than the position of the 'Chosen People' now in Jerusalem. They are divided into two sects—the 'Sephardim,' or Spanish Jews, descendants of those expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1497, and

who still speak Spanish; and the 'Askenazim,' or Polish and German Jews, almost the whole of whom are supported by charity. The efforts to convert them, tried in turn by every Christian sect, have been singularly unsuccessful. Nominally, a certain number come to the Christian schools or workshops, but they are, like the Irish '*yellow male*' converts, people driven by stress of hunger to pretended abjurations. Of course, there are one or two noted exceptions; but, as a rule, every honest person must confess to the total failure of the efforts made on their behalf in a religious sense, in spite of the large sums yearly expended for this object. God's time of harvest is not yet come.

In the evening, the kind and agreeable English Consul paid our travellers a visit in their conventual quarters, and arranged for them to go the following morning to see the Temple, which is no longer forbidden ground to the Christian pilgrim, if the exorbitant '*baksheesh*' of 1*l.* a head be paid for the privilege. After a two-o'clock service in the Holy Sepulchre, the party started at five for the '*Haram*,' as the temple or mosque is called. The visit of Christians is only permitted at daybreak, and must be concluded before the Moslem hour of prayer; so that six o'clock found all the party with a formidable escort of '*cawasses*,' in their full-dress and silver-mounted staves, knocking for admittance at the door of the mosque. After a few minutes' par-

ley, and examination of their firman from the Pacha, the party were (somewhat surlily) admitted, and crossed the wide marble-paved area, in the centre of which is the beautiful enamelled dome of the Haram, covering the great rock called 'El Sakhra.' It is, in fact, the identical site of the Temple on Mount Moriah. Our travellers had left their shoes at the entrance-gate, and walked (for once gladly) barefooted on a pavement which must have been pressed countless times by the feet of Our Blessed Lord.

This magnificent Temple, though glistening with mosaic within and without, and exquisite in proportion, still derives its chief interest from the great rock in the centre, which universal tradition points out as the 'threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite,' and afterwards the site of the great Altar of Sacrifice erected by Solomon. Underneath is a chapel or cavern, which contains the altars or praying-places of Solomon and David, with beautiful twisted cable-like pillars in white marble. The mosque is glorious, with magnificent marble pillars, and the dome is studded with Saracenic devices on a pure gold ground. It was converted into a Christian basilica in the time of the Crusaders. The cloisters still remain along the whole southern side of the outer court, and they extend to Solomon's Porch, where Jesus was wont to walk. Between the Mosque of Omar and the second Mosque of El Aksa a green

sward takes the place of pavement, out of which spring magnificent cypresses; and in the centre of the space is a beautiful pulpit, with lovely pillars, basket-worked capitals, and a marble fountain.

The Mosque of El Aksa was a basilica, built by Justinian, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The apex is full of gilt mosaics, like the dome of St. Lorenzo, and other old churches in Rome and Sicily; and there are also thirty-three columns of beautiful marble, with basket-worked capitals of Jewish work like those in the 'Haram,' which are supposed to have formed portions of the ancient Temple of Solomon. Underneath this basilica is a little recessed chapel, which goes by the name of 'The Cradle of Our Lord,' a spot much revered even by the Moslems.

To the east of this mosque is the graceful little Dome of Solomon, where he is said to have prayed at the dedication of the Temple; and to the left, crossing the open space in front of the Great Mosque or Haram, you come to the most beautiful little cupola in the whole building—the 'Dome of the Chain,' as it is called by the Moslems, supported by seventeen slender marble columns. The Jewish tradition is, that this was the site of the Judgment Seat of King David.

From the Haram walls the view is beautiful, extending over Gethsemane, Olivet, Scopus, and the whole city. On making the circuit of the walls,

which enclose a space forming one-third of the town, our travellers examined the 'Golden Gate,' *i.e.* the 'Beautiful Gate,' where St. Paul cured the impotent man. The rounded archways and fine marble pillars still remain. Underneath are the vaults and crypts of which M. de Saulcy has spoken in such glowing terms. The stones of the wall on the inside are of colossal size; but the origin, date, and use of these subterranean chambers are still a matter of dispute to the learned.

The Mahometan traditions of this mosque are as curious as the Jewish or the Christian. It is the third most sacred place in Moslem belief, being the supposed spot from whence Mahomet ascended up to Heaven. The impression of his foot is said still to be visible on the great rock under the dome; and on a mass of stone or marble near the Golden Gate, they pretend that he will return to take his seat on the Judgment Day.

But the hour sounded for the departure of the Christian strangers, and their guide hurried them across the wide area to the entrance, fearful of an outbreak of fanaticism, which might have been the result of their being found by 'the Faithful' in their 'Holy of Holies' at the hour of Moslem prayer.

The rest of the day was spent in the convent and with the Sisters of St. Joseph, whose admirable orphanage is in the same street as the Franciscan church. Towards evening they returned, with the

venerable Bishop Mastajo, to the Holy Sepulchre, and took part in the usual processional service of the day.

The arrival of an unusually crowded French caravan compelled them the following morning to leave the 'Casa Nuova,' and find lodgings elsewhere. By the kindness of the Marquise N——, one of the ladies was permitted to remain in the convent, the noble French lady having given up her own bed to the English stranger. This kindness was the more appreciated, as, owing to the closing of all the gates of the city from 6 P.M. to 6 A.M., scarcely any of the more solemn services of the place or season could be enjoyed by those encamped outside the walls.

The gentlemen of the party, with two of the ladies, established themselves in very comfortable rooms in 'Hauser's' Hotel, which has been started within the last few years, and which is situated in the centre of the principal Frank Bazaar, called also 'Christian Street.' The only drawback to this house is the 'Pool of Hezekiah,' a cistern 240 feet long, into which most of the rooms look, and which in hot weather is apt to be both stagnant and unsweet. But the hotel itself is scrupulously clean, and the food very much above the average.

Having completed these arrangements, and ordered some of the Jerusalem rings, olive-wood crosses, and mother-of-pearl shells, which form the staple purchases of pilgrims, our travellers determined to try some new horses, of which they stood in

need for their future journeyings, by making certain expeditions in the neighbourhood. Their first ride took them through the Valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom, Mr. M——, the obliging English Consul, acting as their cicerone. Passing by the Pool of Bethesda (which remains to this day), and out of St. Stephen's Gate, they rode under the wall of the Haram to the picturesque Fountain of the Blessed Virgin. The water bubbles up from a spring at the bottom of a deep cavern, to which you descend by a flight of thirty steps. Here tradition affirms that the Virgin came, before the Purification, to wash the Infant Saviour's clothes. A low passage leads from thence to the Fountain of Siloam; but the most curious thing about this fountain is the irregular flow of the water, which sometimes bubbles up two or three feet above the ordinary level, and is sometimes almost dry. This is said to be the 'King's Pool' mentioned by Nehemiah.

Riding about 300 yards farther on, by the side of the Brook Kedron, you reach a fertile spot carefully cultivated, at the end of which is a causeway forming a reservoir, and close by, a very old mulberry-tree, said to mark the spot where Isaiah was torn asunder (by order of King Manasseh) with an iron saw.*

* This horrible punishment is still occasionally resorted to in Egypt; and a terrible description of it was given to our travellers by a resident at Cairo, who had heard of this barbarity under the administration of a governor who was afterwards sent to expiate his cruelty in exile. His account was as follows:—

Turning to the right, the party came suddenly on an overhanging cliff; and getting off their horses, they scrambled down a few steep steps to the famous 'Pool of Siloam.' It is a rectangular basin about fifty feet long, and is still resorted to by the people for all diseases of the eye. Maiden-hair fern grew in profusion round this spring, as well as the 'hyssop on the wall,' so often alluded to in Scripture. Our travellers drank of the water, which is clear and pleasant, and then remounting, rode on to 'En Rogel,' the 'Well of Job,' which is situated at the junction of two valleys, and is built of massive stones of great antiquity. Here the sacred fire of the Temple is said to have been hidden during the Babylonish Captivity.

'I was anxious, when I first came here, to make the acquaintance of the governor of the town, who seemed a person of most courteous and mild demeanour. Still, various stories had been repeated to me which seemed to give the lie to this impression. He received me with great civility, and invited me to dinner. In the course of conversation, I asked him if he found any difficulty in managing his people. He replied, "Oh, at first I did. I have tried all kinds of punishments—placing them on prickly bushes—flogging them with thorns, and every variety of torture. But it was no good—so now *I saw them in pieces*—they are *really* afraid of that!" The cool way in which this savage related different anecdotes of his barbarous cruelty revolted me to such a degree, that I could hardly sit out my audience. But even in this world he got his deserts; for his iniquities coming to the ears of Ibrahim Pacha, he was degraded from his post, stripped of all his ill-gotten goods, and banished to the Blue Nile, with but a single slave to attend him. He was there met, in the last stage of destitution, by a European traveller, who told me he had spent his last dollar, though almost dying of hunger, in buying a bottle of eau-de-cologne—so completely did his habits of luxury (acquired in the days of his rapacity) cling to him to the end.'

The whole of the Valley of Hinnom is desolate and gloomy to a degree. Here is 'Aceldama,' the Field of Blood, a deep charnelhouse still used 'to bury strangers in.' And here is the 'blasted tree,' on which tradition affirms that Judas hanged himself. The whole ground is honeycombed with tombs —small gloomy caverns with narrow doorways, and Hebrew or Greek inscriptions. It was to these tombs that the Apostles are said to have fled for safety on the night of the betrayal of Our Lord.

Returning to the Brook Kedron, and striking upwards by a steep path, which led them past the Virgin's Tomb, our party turned to the left, and soon found themselves by the famous 'Tombs of the Kings,' on the road to Nablous, and near the Damascus Gate. So varied are the theories as to the origin of these wonderful sepulchres, that it is hopeless to give an opinion on the subject. M. de Saulcy is convinced that they are the restingplaces of the Kings of Judah, and boasts of having got a sarcophagus (now in the Louvre), with an inscription on it in Hebrew, which leads to the belief that the female skeleton it contained must have been that of David's daughter. On the other hand, Josephus, St. Jerome, Eusebius, and others declare that the tombs are of much later date, and that the principal one is that of the Empress Helena.

Descending into a vestibule or porch, with a

beautiful façade carved in clusters of grapes and flowers, you come to the entrance of the principal tomb, which is on the south side. This door was a marvel of mechanism, being covered with a heavy circular slab of stone running into a groove, which appeared to form part of the solid rock. It could only be opened by pressure from without, so that the entrance was impracticable except to the initiated; and should an unwary traveller be so unfortunate as to enter, and leave the door ajar for a moment, his fate was sealed, unless some one would release him from without; as it instantly swung back into its place, which it closed as with a vice. Crawling into this place almost on hands and knees, our party came upon a succession of chambers with recesses and sarcophagi—all more or less broken, but some finely carved. They resemble a little the Tombs of Petra, and are equally devoid of any kind of inscription. The Jews resented the explorations of M. de Saulcy to such a degree, that he was compelled to give them up, and probably no further light will ever be thrown on the mystery which is attached to these curious sepulchres.

The pleasure of our travellers' expedition was somewhat damped by an accident which happened to one of their party—a vicious little horse ridden by one of the ladies having lashed out suddenly, and hit a gentleman on the ankle with such force that he fainted from the pain. No bones, however,

were broken, and a few days later saw him again in the saddle.

The following morning the English Consul again offered his services to our party, and escorted them to pay a visit to the Armenian Patriarch. The Armenians have the finest convent in Jerusalem, and situated in the healthiest quarter. The church is built on the site of the martyrdom of St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem. The Archimandrite and his priests received the travellers, with great honour, in a magnificent saloon overlooking the whole town, of which the walls and floors were lined with marble. Pipes, coffee, and sweetmeats having been handed round, in the usual oriental fashion, they were shown over the convent, which is very large, and contains, besides pilgrims' rooms, a large seminary for the education of the clergy, and a printing establishment, where (as at the great Armenian convent at Venice) all the works of the community are published. The view from the terrace is very fine; and from thence a covered passage leads up a few steps into the library, which is a large and valuable one, containing many rare and curious manuscripts and illuminated books; and among others, the MS. works of St. Gregory of Nyssa. In the convent garden magnificent cypresses grow, reminding one more of Tivoli than of Jerusalem.

From the garden, our travellers were taken

into the church, which is the largest in the city after that of the Holy Sepulchre. An exquisite chapel has been built over the spot where St. James (according to Armenian tradition) was buried, by the hands of the Blessed Virgin herself, after he had been decapitated at Cæsarea. The doors are of tortoiseshell, most beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl. They have also the chair of St. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. The whole church is richly decorated; and from the roof hang a profusion of ostrich-eggs and silver lamps, suspended from silver chains in festoons, which have a very curious and beautiful effect. The mosaic pavement is like that of St. Mark's at Venice. The curtains are in very ancient and delicate embroidery, and there are some curious and interesting pictures—among the rest, one of 'The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in the Frozen Pool.'

Afterwards, one of the priests took them down a narrow lane to the House of Annas, where a tree is shown to which they affirm Our Lord was fastened, and where He was 'smitten on the face,' for his reply to the High Priest. From thence they came to the Palace of Caiaphas, which is also in the hands of the Armenians, and where the full measure of insults, 'shame and spitting,' was heaped upon Him who, 'like a lamb before his shearers,' opened not His mouth. Here also He was thrice denied by Peter—as if nothing were to

be wanting in His sufferings: not only the shame, and the acute torture of coarseness and brutality, to His exquisitely sensitive nature, but the contempt with which His love was met by His own people; and, worse still, the desertion—the loneliness; for 'all the disciples forsook Him and fled,' save the one who denied Him! In all the steps of His Passion He was *alone*, in the midst of a crowd thirsting for His precious Blood.

The Armenians also showed our travellers the Stone which was rolled away from the Sepulchre, and the Prison where Our Lord was thrust while waiting for examination.*

Leaving these sad and painful spots, the English Consul next rode with them outside the town, to what is somewhat profanely called 'New Jerusalem' —the immense buildings, college, pilgrims' home, and church, lately erected by the Russian Government not far from the Jaffa Gate, and which really

* Faber writes of this spot: 'There is a vision given in the meditations of Sister Emmerich, which is, to say the least of it, most artistically beautiful. Jesus, to be least troublesome, had been sunk by His guard into a kind of well, and is sitting at the bottom, with His hands tied behind Him. The sun of Good Friday rises above the hills, and mounts into the sky, and at length has attained sufficient altitude to pierce the well with one slanting ray. It lights on Jesus. That solitary beam of brightness illuminates Him in the depth of His dungeon, and He raises His drooping eyes to meet it. The creature is illuminating its Creator! His face is pale as death, disfigured with blood, and earth, and spittle—His hair drenched, matted, and disordered—His hands manacled and pinioned—His vesture disfigured and disarrayed: and there He is in the first sight of that sun, at whose setting the great mystery of woe will be complete and over.'

forms a town of itself. The Russian Consul received our travellers with great courtesy, claiming them as countrymen (which, in part, they were), and showed them over the whole place. He resides there, as well as the clever and agreeable Russian bishop, Kyrillos, who, from his singularly attractive manner and appearance, is a universal favourite at Jerusalem. The view from the terrace is fine, but both that and the gardens are as yet unfinished. The fittings of the church are gorgeous, and have all been executed and sent from Moscow. The panels of the organ-loft and screen are all beautifully painted with full-length figures of saints on a gold ground, and the carving of the oak lecterns, altar, and seats is very fine. But the lamps are more beautiful than all the rest, both in design and execution.

The Duke de Luisnes had just arrived with his iron ship, which he was going to launch on the Dead Sea. It had been with the utmost difficulty that the different pieces of the vessel had been brought from Jaffa, on account of their tremendous weight; and the poor camels, lying down in the court below, seemed perfectly exhausted with the fatigue they had undergone. Afterwards, our travellers heard that the ship had turned out a failure, owing to the heat: no one could stand the reflection of the sun on those iron-plated sides.

The following day, the Prussian Consul, Dr.

Rosen, the best antiquarian authority in Jerusalem, went with our party to pay a visit to the Syrian Patriarch, Mar Gregorius, whose very curious old palace, church, and convent are in a street near the English hospital. The venerable Bishop received them in the usual Eastern fashion, in a saloon fitted up with divans, on which they squatted, and had coffee, sweetmeats, and pipes. They found he had just returned from India, where he had visited the primitive branch of his Church on the Malabar Coast—a mission which dates back to the times of St. Thomas, and where they have maintained the same rites and ceremonies as in the days of the Apostles. He showed them a roll containing a panoramic representation of his travels, and of the procession in which he went to the church at Travancore, done by a native artist. The Rajah, who is a Christian prince, received him with royal honours. One of the pictures represented his landing from a longboat, the priests meeting him with crucifix and crosier, but the whole very grotesque in form and colour—the rowers painted in red and yellow, and very Chinese as to perspective. There are upwards of 70,000 Christians there.

The Patriarch next showed them a very curious old Syriac copy of the Four Gospels, 1200 years old, written very beautifully in Syriac on parchment. The book was enclosed in a silver-gilt case embossed with figures, and with very curious clasps. He then

proposed to take them into the church, built on the site of the House of St. Mark, or rather the house 'where Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark,' abode. It is a very interesting old church, and contains a curious ancient font with a cover of silver, in which St. Mark is said to have been baptized; and also a Byzantine picture of the Blessed Virgin, said to have been painted by St. Luke—a very beautiful Madonna, more like a Luini than one of the usual Byzantine paintings. The venerable Patriarch was a handsome old man with a flowing white beard, and was dressed in violet lined with red, and a wonderful black veiled head-dress.

From the Syrian convent, Dr. Rosen took the party to see the Kaiserswerth Deaconesses, who have a school, hospital, and dispensary near the English Protestant church. The Superior, Charlotte Piltz, is a very remarkable person, and she and her sisters have done a great deal of good among the poor and sick at Jerusalem.

The Protestant Bishop (Gobat) lives in a house adjoining, and has alternate German, Hebrew, and English services in his church. He was for a long time a missionary in Abyssinia, and showed our travellers a curious manuscript from Mount Sinai, and a photograph of the oldest known copy of the Old and New Testament, in Greek, of the third century. The Book of the Maccabees, as

well as of the Apocalypse, is inserted in it as canonical.

Another very interesting expedition made by our travellers was with the obliging French Consul, M. de Barrère, who called for them one morning to take them to the Church of St. Ann. He had good-naturedly brought with him a magnificent white donkey for one of the ladies, who was still suffering from the scorpion-sting of Karnac. But the beast had a will and way of his own, and, in spite of the exertions of both the '*cawasses*,' insisted on dragging his rider in every direction but the right one, and in refusing to stop when she wished to do so.

The Church of St. Ann stands on the slope of a hill near the St. Stephen's Gate. It was built by the Crusaders over the House of St. Ann, mother of the Blessed Virgin, and is mentioned in all the early chronicles. At first it was used as a home for two or three widow ladies, who wished to lead a quiet religious life. Then it was appropriated to the Benedictines, and became a large and flourishing convent, the wife of Baldwin I. having taken the veil there. When the Crusaders were driven out of Jerusalem, Saladin converted the convent into a college; but it soon fell into decay, and remained a semi-ruin till about twenty years ago, when the reigning Sultan made it over to the Emperor of the French, who is now restoring it with great pomp and splendour. It is said that the

Empress Eugénie has set her heart on coming to the opening.

Passing down the narrow street about thirty yards beyond the Court of the Holy Sepulchre, there is a picturesque Gothic gateway, on which, among various defaced carvings, that of a 'Lamb' is clearly visible. This is the entrance to the Hospital of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem—that once noble foundation, of which only a few broken walls and ruined chambers now remain. Founded in the eleventh century, by some merchants of Amalfi, as a Hospital for Poor Pilgrims, and dedicated to St. John (the Patriarch of Alexandria), Godfrey de Bouillon was hospitably received and entertained there after his conquest of Jerusalem; and from that time it became the cradle and home of a military and religious Order, distinguished throughout Christendom for its piety, humility, and valour. The knights adopted as their costume a black dress with a white cross on the left breast; and when the struggle began once more between the Christians and the Moslems for the possession of the Holy Places, the knights took up arms in defence of the Holy Sepulchre, and for a long time, by prodigies of valour, maintained their position against the overwhelming force of the enemy. When the Christians were finally defeated at Acre, in 1291, these gallant knights fought to the last; and only a shattered remnant, covered with wounds and

blood, set sail for Cyprus, and finally established themselves in the Island of Rhodes.

Full of these recollections, our travellers picked their way through the dirty archway and still dirtier court to a staircase leading to a little cloister. On the south side are the walls of three rooms, one of which is very large, and said to have been the refectory. On the other side are the ruins of what must have been an oratory, with one or two Gothic windows, of which fragments of the tracery only remain. There is scarcely a vestige of the once fine church dedicated to the Virgin 'de Latina,' except the wall of the principal apse, where the High Altar must have stood. All the rest is gone, and a patch of green covers the space once occupied by devout worshippers of the 'Lamb,' slain for His people's sins. Underneath are extensive walls and stabling, and lately a new gateway has been discovered, mentioned by Josephus, and valuable (according to Dr. Rosen) as an evidence of the authenticity of the site of Calvary; this gate being described as at a certain distance from the place where the instruments of torture were thrown, which distance tallies exactly with the position of the chapel where the relics of the True Cross were found.

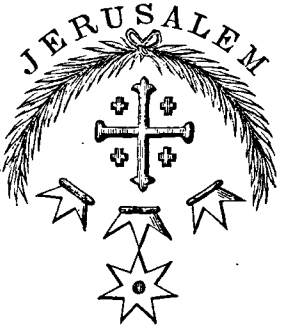
There are the ruins of a second church a little farther on, which is supposed to have been the one dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, and attached to a Benedictine nunnery, which stood on the oppo-

site side of what is now called Palmer Street, near the Coptic convent. This site is now occupied by a tannery. Close to this is a tall minaret, which the legend asserts was built on the spot where Omar prayed on taking possession of Jerusalem; the Caliph having generously declined to pray in the church, lest the Moslems should make that an excuse for taking it away from the Christians. Would that this magnanimous spirit existed among the Turks of the present day!

From the Hospital of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, M. de Barrère took our travellers to call on the Greek Patriarch, who lives close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—an arched passage over 'Christian Street' connecting it with the sacred building itself. Our travellers were received, as usual, with the greatest kindness and courtesy, and shown into a saloon, of which the only furniture was the divan, on which sat the Patriarch and half a dozen ecclesiastics—all dressed in black robes edged with fur, and with the black high square caps peculiar to the Greek Church. Two subdeacons waited on the company, and brought them what appeared to be a never-ending succession of coffee, sweetmeats, and pipes. The Patriarch himself is a most venerable old man, between eighty and ninety years old. He was very kind, and desired his secretary to show everything in the convent to the English strangers, and to take them up to the dome

of the Holy Sepulchre, from whence the view of the building below is very striking.*

The Patriarch's library is large, and contains some very interesting MSS. and books; among the rest, a curious MS. of the Gospels, written in gold letters on purple vellum, with beautiful illuminations of the ninth century; and a copy of the Book of Job of the twelfth century, with miniatures of Job and his friends on every page. In the church is a very curious picture of the Blessed Virgin and Child, said to be painted by St. Luke; but only the face and hands are visible; the rest is covered over with plates of gold or silver-gilt. The views from the terrace and from the convent-garden are very fine.



The same evening some of the party submitted to the operation of tattooing the Crusaders' 'Arms of Jerusalem' on the wrist, which most pilgrims desire to have done as an unfading memorial of their Holy Land visit. The general device is the Franciscan Cross in the centre, with the three crowns of the Magi below, and the Star of Bethlehem; while round the cross are two palm-branches, and

* The restoration of the dome, which was in the most melancholy state of dilapidation at the time this was written, has now been undertaken by the Russian and French Governments, and the work is advancing rapidly towards completion.—June, 1867.

above, the word 'Jerusalem.' The operation is performed, as such devices generally are among sailors, by the puncture of hot needles in the given pattern, into which a preparation of gunpowder is then inserted. It takes about twenty-five minutes, and is rather painful, both at the time and for some days after, as the arm generally inflames a good deal; but it is, of course, indelible.

The following morning the Marquise N—— took one of the party to Mount Zion, to show her the Cœnaculum, or 'large upper room furnished,' where Our Lord supped with His disciples before His Passion. Underneath is the Tomb of David (undisputed until this century), where the Prophet King and Solomon his son were interred in sepulchres hewn out of the rock, and probably remain there to this day, though walled up by the superstitious fears of the Moslems, like the sepulchre of the Patriarchs in Hebron. At the east end of the Cœnaculum is a little niche, and here our pilgrims knelt and prayed with the Franciscan father who served as their guide. It is the same room and the same site mentioned by St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem in the fourth century, as that in which the Apostles were assembled when they received the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. Epiphanius states distinctly that this building escaped destruction when the city was taken by Titus. It was used by the Franciscans as a convent till the six-

teenth century, when they were expelled from it by Jewish and Moslem intrigues. Mass is, however, still said in this room from time to time, and especially on Holy Thursday, the day of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, when the feet of the pilgrims are likewise washed here, in commemoration of the same service performed on this identical spot by Our Lord. Here St. James was elected Bishop of Jerusalem, and a tradition (common in the fourth and fifth centuries) ascribes also to this building the honour of having been the home of the Blessed Virgin and St. John after Our Lord's Ascension into heaven.

How is it possible to describe the thoughts which throng upon the mind in a site like this? First, the remembrance of Our Blessed Lord. Long before the hour came He had looked forward to that scene in the supper-room. 'Having loved His own, He loved them to the end,' and reserved the chief invention of His love until He had come to the very threshold of His Passion, and they were about to be parted. 'With desire have I desired te eat this Passover with you.' Is there anything which fills us more full of reverence and love than those passages of St. Thomas Aquinas on the subject of Our Lord's communion? And, as if such thoughts were not already more than one could bear, there comes the whole vision of the Day of Pentecost —that anxious, mournful, yet expectant group wait-

ing for 'the Comforter'—the 'Paraclete.' (St. Athanasius notes that the word does not exist in the Old Testament.) And then He *comes*—with such vehemence of love!—'as a rushing wind,' to bring 'all things to their remembrance;' to teach them adoration, and fortitude, and love, and joy; that they might dare all things and bear all things for their Lord. And with His presence came the further certainty—the untold support—of knowing that He would be with them *always*, 'even to the end of the world;' that He would be the fire kindled in the hearts of men, to fill them with the love of God and of each other; and that He would for ever guide, and direct, and inspire 'Christ's Body,' which is the Church, in which He dwells now and for evermore.

The Moslems jealously guard this chamber, so it was with much difficulty that permission was obtained for a portable altar to be placed in one corner for the celebration of the Divine Sacrifice; but none who knelt there could forget the feelings the spot called forth. It was the Friday before what is called, by Catholics, Passion Week, and the awful days were drawing near which were to commemorate the last events in the life of the Son of Man. The eleventh chapter of St. John is appointed to be read for the Gospel of that day; and, in consequence, a touching pilgrimage is performed by the people to the scene of that portion of Holy Writ

—*i.e.* to Bethany, that quiet little village nestled in a gorge of the mountains beyond the Mount of Olives, and on the direct road to Jericho and the Dead Sea.

Leaving the town by St. Stephen's Gate, our travellers rode down the steep hill, and up again by a rugged and uneven path which skirts the mountain-side; and after half an hour's more scrambling, came suddenly to a turn in the road which brought them in front of the House of Mary and Martha, the site of which has lately been purchased by the Marquise de N——, with the hope of converting it into a chapel. At the back is a garden, and beyond that, facing the opposite side of the hill, is a long low building, with a door which opens on a flight of twenty-eight steps, leading down to a small vaulted chamber, beyond which is a tomb hewn out of the rock. This is the Grave of Lazarus, a place apparently untouched since the words 'Come forth!' issued from the Divine lips. Adjoining the cavern was once a Benedictine convent, now in ruins; and a little beyond is the stone on which Our Saviour rested when Martha met him with the faithful yet half-reproachful words, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.'

What Capernaum was in Galilee, Bethany was in Judea—the home to which Our Blessed Lord retired for rest and prayer after His day of thankless toil in the city of Jerusalem. Here also He

deigned specially to sanctify human love and human friendship, not only by His words, but by His example. It is written that 'Jesus *loved* Martha, and her sister (Mary), and Lazarus'—not only holy Lazarus, not only contemplative Mary, who loved to sit at His dear feet and drink in His precious words—but the bustling, toiling, painstaking Martha, the one who was cumbered 'with much serving' and many worldly cares. What a comfort this thought should be to us!

Here also, in this same Bethany, was the house of Simon the Leper, where 'the woman with an alabaster box of precious ointment' poured it on Our Lord's head as He sat at meat, and thereby gave occasion to one of those touching lessons from his lips on the value in God's sight of even prodigal offerings to the Body of Our Lord, which is His Church on earth, and a warning to the utilitarian spirit of even good people in our day, who think all 'waste' which is not given to visible works of charity. From Bethany, again, Our Saviour set out on the morning of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem; and by this obvious path our pilgrims, after Mass, retraced their steps. Dean Stanley's description of this scene is so vivid that we cannot refrain from copying a portion of it in a note, as nothing could well be added to or taken from it.*

* 'Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and, as they came through the gardens whose clusters of

Should our thoughts go back to still earlier Bible story, we may trace likewise here, the flight of David from Absalom, when he went over the Brook Kedron towards the way of the wilderness, and went up 'weeping' by the ascent of Olivet. Steps are

palm-trees rose on the southern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upwards towards Bethany with loud shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there on the previous night, and who came testifying to the great event at the sepulchre of Lazarus. The road soon loses sight of Bethany. It is now a rough but still broad and well-defined mountain track, winding over rocks and loose stones: a steep declivity below on the left; the sloping shoulder of Olivet above on the right; fig-trees below and above, here and there, growing out of the rocky soil. Along the road the multitude threw down the branches, which they cut as they went along . . . The larger portion unwrapped their loose cloaks from their shoulders, and stretched them along the rough path, to form a momentary carpet as He approached. The two streams met . . . Gradually the long procession swept round the little valley that furrows the hill and over the ridge on its western side, where first begins the "descent of the Mount of Olives" towards Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the south-eastern corner of the city. . . . It was at this precise point . . . that the shout of triumph, the earliest hymn of Christian devotion, burst forth from the multitude—"Hosanna to the Son of David!" . . . There was a pause as the shout rang through the long defile: and as the Pharisees, who stood by in the crowd, complained, He pointed to the stones, which, strewn beneath their feet, would immediately "cry out," if "these were to hold their peace." Again the procession advanced. The road descends a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments, and the path mounts again; it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city bursts into view. . . . Immediately below is the Valley of the Kedron, here seen in its greatest depths as it joins the Valley of Hinnom, and thus giving full effect to the great peculiarity of Jerusalem, seen only on its eastern side—its situation as of a city rising out of a deep abyss. It is hardly possible to doubt that this rise and turn of the road—this rocky ledge—was the exact point where the multitude paused again and "He, when He beheld the city, wept over it."'—Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine.*

cut in the limestone rock, proving the antiquity of the path. Here also he was met by Hushai, whom he sent back to the city to watch over his cause, and defeat the counsel of Ahithophel: and here too, when David was a little past the top of the hill, he encountered Ziba, the wily servant of Mephibosheth: and then forth from Bethany came Shimei to curse the 'Lord's anointed,' which gave occasion to that beautiful answer of the sorrowful yet penitent monarch to his followers, who wished to avenge the insult—'Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bid him: and who is he that shall dare say, *Why* hath he done so?'.

The ensuing weeks were spent by one of the party almost exclusively in the services of each day; leaving much to remember but little to record, except of such a nature as would be more suited to a religious work than to a book of travels. On Palm Sunday the ceremony was singularly impressive. The palms were laid up in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, and then blessed by the venerable Patriarch, at a temporary altar erected in front of the entrance to the Greek Church, and given by him to each pilgrim as he or she passed and knelt at his feet to kiss his hand. The antiphon 'Pueri Hebræorum portantes ramos,' &c., never appeared more real or more appropriate. Then followed the procession round the Holy Sepulchre, and the glorious hymn, 'Gloria, laus et honor;' and the prayer went

up from every heart and voice, 'With the angels and children let us be found faithful.'

The various services of that week will ever remain in the memory of our travellers in connection with the sacred spots where they were commemorated, but that of Good Friday must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

GOOD FRIDAY AT JERUSALEM.*

It is the evening of Holy Thursday. The last wail of the *Tenebræ* has died out of the aisles of the solemn Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A temporary altar had been erected in the morning, opposite the sacred shrine where our dear Lord was laid, and upwards of a thousand pilgrims had received the Bread of Life from the hands of the venerable Patriarch. But now this altar has been removed, and one by one the worshippers had departed, save such of the Franciscan monks as had been appointed to watch throughout the night by the Blessed Sacrament, and whom the Turks had consequently locked into the building.

In the Church of St. Salvatore all is profoundly dark, save in the chapel on the left, where the Blessed Sacrament has been deposited in the Sepulchre until the terrible day be over which witnessed the death-agony of the Son of God. That side-chapel is decorated on all sides with beautiful plants

* This episode in our travellers' journal is reprinted, almost literally, from the *Month*.

and flowers, and illuminated with a multitude of tapers. There two figures are kneeling, motionless and absorbed in prayer. One by one the Franciscan monks, wearied with their long fast and the terrible penances of the night before, have disappeared through the side-door which leads into their dormitory. Still the two watchers kneel on. They are women. The one still young, dressed in deep widow's mourning; the other older, and bearing on her face traces of still deeper suffering, yet with an expression of peace which spoke of that suffering having been accepted for the love of Him who sent it. Six years ago this lady, the Marquise de ——, of noble and even royal blood, had come, like her young English companion, as a stranger and pilgrim to Jerusalem, and there felt the irresistible attraction which, in spite of its mournfulness and desolation, binds every heart to the Holy City. She found likewise that there was a great work for any woman to do who was willing to devote herself to such a life; the work of a St. Paula, to assist in receiving and looking after the female pilgrims, who, at Christmas and Easter tides, flock by hundreds to the Casa Nuova; to have the care of the altars of the different churches and chapels, of the linen and vestments; decorations, &c. And so she has stayed on, doing the work of a deaconess, invaluable to the Franciscan Fathers, who marvel now how they got on before without her, and leading

a life of austere penance and devotion in the Third Order of St. Francis. She has devoted the whole of her fortune to buying up the Holy Places whenever an opportunity offers, and rescuing them from desecration at the hands of the Turks; and has thus reduced herself to the state of holy poverty which St. Francis loved so well. At Emmaus she has bought the house of Cleophas, and erected a chapel and hospice on the very spot where our Blessed Lord 'was made known to them in the breaking of bread.' Again, the house of Mary and Martha at Bethany and the grave of Lazarus, the scene of the miracle at Cana in Galilee, and other sacred spots, she, one by one, has redeemed from Turkish rapacity and converted into sanctuaries, to which special Indulgences are attached. It is a blessed work, little known to the outside world, and still less thought of by her whose deep humility veils every action in the sense of her own unworthiness.

But to return to our tale. This loving watcher by our Lord's Body at last rose, and touching her companion, said softly: 'My child, you must come and rest; remember to-morrow morning.' The two women left the church reluctantly, and threaded their way up the steep and narrow street to the Casa Nuova, where, bowing their heads to the 'God be with you!' of the Spanish monk who let them through the heavy nailed door, they walked swiftly

up the stairs and through the long corridor to the two cells set apart for their use, the largest and most comfortable of which had been given up by the elder lady to the younger, in spite of her remonstrances. 'I am at home here,' she replied, 'and you are not used to our hard life;' and by this act of true Christian charity she enabled the English traveller to remain in the convent when the great influx of pilgrims from the French caravan had compelled the Custode dei Santi Luoghi to tell her she must seek a lodging elsewhere.

Five hours later, the same women, closely veiled and carrying a lantern, were toiling painfully down the rugged and slippery street which leads through the bazaars to the other side of the city.

From thence they proceeded, with still swifter steps, under the arch, passed the gate of the Convent of the Père Ratisbon, where the Filles de Sion have established their admirable orphanage, and so on to the postern-gate in the wall which admitted them to the courtyard of the Church of the Flagellation.

'His Royal Highness is not yet arrived,' said the lay brother as he unbarred the door; 'but he will not long tarry: it is just four o'clock.'

So saying, he ushered the ladies in to the cloister and then into the church, where the only light was thrown on the column of the Flagellation, that terrible monument of man's impiety and the long-suffering of God. In a few moments the door again

opened, and admitted a man still young, of noble and aristocratic bearing, (followed by two ecclesiastics and two other gentlemen,) who advanced in front of the column, and pushing aside the cushion placed for him, knelt on the ground in long and fervent adoration. An exile from his country and his kingdom, this royal pilgrim had come, in earnest faith and deep humility, to visit the scenes of his Saviour's sufferings and death. Bareheaded he had walked from the city gates, on his first arrival, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, discarding all pomp and retinue, and compelling the Pacha, who had come out to meet him with due honours, to walk bareheaded likewise by his side, behind the symbol of man's redemption. And in the same spirit he had chosen this early hour to follow unnoticed, and almost alone, the footsteps of the Lord he loved so well, in that awful Via Dolorosa which witnessed the most touching portion of His Passion.

The solemn service began. Commencing with the Prætorium of Pilate, where the terrible sentence was pronounced, the little band of worshippers followed the sacred and sorrowful path down the steep hill, kneeling at the different stations, heedless of the mud; while the low chant of the 'Stabat Mater' echoed through the deserted streets. The day was just breaking when they arrived at the House of Mary, from whence the Mother of Sorrows

hurried forth to meet her Divine Son. Those who know the spot, and are familiar with the wonderful 'Good-Friday' picture of De la Roche, will marvel at the accuracy with which the painter has, perhaps unconsciously, depicted the room and the window from which our Lady first beheld that mournful procession which must have wrung her heart with anguish unspeakable.

At the House (so called) of Veronica a little interruption occurred from a file of camels passing along the narrow and ill-paved street; but their drivers, with skill and care, made them avoid the kneeling figures. With all their bigotry and hatred of the Christian faith, the Turks have an instinctive reverence for every outward expression of devotion. Fearless, and without false shame themselves in all matters regarding their faith, no sooner does the cry from the minaret announce the hour of prayer than they will break off whatever occupation or conversation they may be engaged in, and, spreading their carpet, instantly kneel and repeat the form which their religion prescribes. Which of us has the like courage when the Angelus bell summons us, in the company of others, to dwell for a few moments on the mystery of the Incarnation?

At the Seventh Station, a bazaar has been built across the Via Dolorosa, which compels the pilgrims to make a *détour* through the remains of what was

once the Hospice of the Knights Templars, in order to arrive at the station where our Blessed Lord addressed the daughters of Jerusalem, 'who mourned and bewailed Him.' It is a blessed and comforting thought to women, wearied with the struggle and strife and misunderstandings of this hard world, that to them alone was granted the unspeakable privilege of ministering to His Sacred Humanity, and that He never rejected their love or their sympathy. The last at the Cross, and the first at the Sepulchre, it was to a woman that our Master first showed Himself after His Resurrection. Therefore let them take heart, going forth, like Mary, to meet Him with His Cross, ministering to the suffering members of His sacred body, and keeping ever near to His sacred feet; and so will their love and fidelity meet with its reward, and they will be reckoned among those 'whose names are written in the Book of Life.'

At last the gates of the Holy Sepulchre are reached, that wonderful church which encloses in its wide area the scenes of the last five stations. But here an unexpected obstacle presented itself. In spite of all the blood and treasure wasted in the Crimean war (a war which was the climax of a rupture founded on a dispute on the subject of the Holy Places), the Turks still retain unmolested possession of that building so sacred to the heart of every Christian, and with petty tyranny continually

refuse to open it at the hours desired by the pilgrims. On this occasion even the presence of the royal duke did not induce them to open the door a moment sooner than had been fixed by the Pacha; and for more than an hour the little group stood or knelt on the steps leading to the side-chapel of the Blessed Virgin. At last the doors are thrown open, and the little procession, passing by the Stone of Unction, and up the steps leading to the Chapel of Calvary, come to the spot where, stripped of His garments, our Divine Lord was nailed to His Cross. The exact place is pointed out, and is on the right of that terrible hole where the Cross was sunk when lifted up, whereby He that hung thereon 'might draw all men unto Himself.' Here also, during that exquisite time of torture, His Blessed Mother stood; and the voices of the kneelers are choked with emotion as the words '*Sancta Mater, istud agas,*' &c. echo through the sacred building. To the left now they turn, to the very spot where the tremendous sacrifice was consummated, and where the riven rock still remains as a standing witness of that awful mystery. Thence, passing again down the steps, it was with a sense of relief from a pain and tension too great to be borne that the pilgrims came to the beautiful low shrine where, the anguish and torture of the three hours' agony being over, the earthly remains of our dear Lord were laid. Crossing the outer chapel, where still remains the stone

on which the angel sat when he appeared to the women after the Resurrection, and bowing under the long low arch which leads into the inner shrine, they knelt one by one in the tiny sanctuary where the open Sepulchre seems to speak once more of hope and joy, and to re-echo the words, 'He is not here: He is risen. Behold the place where the Lord lay.'

The Via Crucis is over. It is seven o'clock, and the impressive and beautiful office of the day has begun. The Chapel of Calvary is crowded almost to suffocation with kneeling figures in deep mourning. Everything is hung with black. The Lessons and the Passion are over, and the venerable Patriarch, rising, begins to uncover the Crucifix, while the monks intone the *Ecce, lignum Crucis!* Then commences that portion of the office which none can ever forget who have witnessed it at Rome; how much less at Jerusalem, in the very spot which witnessed the actual throes and death-agony of the Man-God and the woes of His Mother! One by one the worshippers rise and prostrate themselves in adoration three times, kissing the feet of their Lord, while the wail of the Reproaches rises and falls, and reverberates through the sacred shrine. The *Crux fidelis* and *Pange lingua* are taken up by the choir, and then, the mournful ceremony over, the candles on the altar are lighted, illuminating the many upturned and weeping faces, and the

priests go in procession to the chapel below to bring back the Blessed Sacrament, which has been deposited in the Holy Sepulchre the preceding day; while the glorious hymn *Vexilla Regis* is sung by the whole congregation. Our English traveller, absorbed in the emotions of the place and of the hour, had remained motionless after the adoration, until the beginning of Vespers, when she turned to look at her companion, whose fragile and attenuated form still knelt beside her, while her face seemed lighted up with an unearthly glow, redeeming features which had no great natural beauty, and making one think of the old German pictures of saints. And now the anthem *Consummatum est* is over, and the *Miserere* is taken up by both priest and people; and then again the lights are extinguished, and the altar is stripped as before, and all is desolate. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of this office on this spot, or the sense of utter desolation which falls upon the soul when all is over. It is an approach to Mary's sorrow, and a shadow of it; but to one who has not felt it, it cannot be explained. We have read of the Crucifixion all our lives, and have tried in our various degrees to realise it; but here we *see* it, as it were, with our bodily eyes, which help out our weak faith, and our devotion to the dolours of our Mother heightens and deepens our devotion to the Passion of her Son.

It was with a feeling of utter faintness and exhaustion that the two ladies whose steps we have followed turned at last out of the sacred building, and bent their steps homewards. It was only ten o'clock in the morning, but many days seemed to have been crowded into the preceding seven hours.

At the turn leading into the principal bazaar the English lady stopped: 'Dear friend, I must go; my friends will be waiting for me; I will meet you in the evening.' So saying, she left the Marquise, and passed rapidly through the bazaar, where beads and rosaries and mother-of-pearl crucifixes are the principal articles of commerce, stopping at last at a little hotel lately opened, and looking on what is called 'Hezekiah's pool.' The English were swarming out of this inn, on their way to the solitary English service given in Holy Week by Bishop Gobat and his staff at the Protestant church lately erected near the Gate of David. Nowhere is the unhappy position of the Anglican Establishment so painfully exhibited as at Jerusalem. It is confounded with every kind of German Protestantism. Every other Church—Latin, Greek, Armenian and Copt, Syrian and Maronite—has its altar and its shrine within the area of the Holy Sepulchre. The Protestants alone have no part or parcel in the sacred inheritance, and have no share in the spots where our dear Lord suffered and died and was

buried. How any one belonging to the High-Church party can go to Jerusalem and share in its solemn services, and come away unconverted, surpasses comprehension. The ordinary Protestant takes refuge in a comfortable kind of scepticism as regards every spot and every tradition held by the Church; and their position is, at any rate, more intelligible.

In the afternoon of that day the same black figure was seen passing through the bazaar, where the Turkish venders were squatted on their boards, under the shade of their bright-coloured awnings, consoling themselves, as usual, with their long pipes, for the apparent absence of all customers. The heat was very great; but the Lady, with a basket on her arm, does not appear to feel it, and, turning to the left, disappeared in a tortuous street, and up a long and dirty staircase to a low door, which she pushed open gently, and entered what appeared to be a rude workshop. Carvers' tools, fragments of mother-of-pearl, and of the peculiar stone found in the Jordan, were scattered about, with strings of beads, half-polished and half-strung, and Bethlehem shells rudely sculptured, with half-finished sketches of the Nativity and other sacred subjects. In a corner of this room, by a window, was a rough pallet, and on it lay the figure of a boy of fifteen or sixteen, evidently in the last stage of disease.

'Ah, madre mia!' he exclaimed, as the large eyes turned to the door, and glistened with pleasure at the sight of his visitor; 'how good of you to come! I did not expect you to-day; and the time has seemed so long, so long, and I have suffered so much.'

'My poor boy,' replied the lady, gently taking his hand and parting the hair from his brow, which seemed contracted by pain, 'I fear the pain has indeed been bad, but it is easier to bear to-day, is it not? *To-day*, when such untold agony was borne for us by our dear Lord,—to-day the cup of suffering should be less bitter. See,' she added cheerfully, 'I have brought you some oranges and some flowers, which the good old lay brother at Gethsemane gave me yesterday evening. These are his first roses; and look at the hyacinths, and the irises, and the jessamine—that favourite flower of mine, which means, as you know, in the Indian language, "I love you with all my heart." We will arrange them in these two little vases I have brought for you, and put them on either side of your picture of the Sacred Heart, so that you may see them from your bed.'

So saying, she fetched some water, and began arranging the flowers, while the poor boy eagerly watched her every movement. When she had finished, he said to her softly:

'Talk to me a little bit; I want something to

remember and to help me to bear the pain when you are gone. The last time you spoke of suffering being, not punishment, but only a sign of love; and I have thought of it over and over again, and tried so hard not to murmur any more.'

'The flowers must talk to you, dear child,' was her reply, as she knelt by the bed, and took his thin and wasted hand in hers. 'Do you not think it is so strange that Gethsemane should produce such lovely flowers?—that spot where it would seem as if the sweat of agony should have cursed the very ground on which it fell. Yet is it not to teach us that it is out of anguish that comes forth sweetness? just as the bay-leaves must be crushed and bruised to give forth their pleasant smell.'

She had spoken so far when the door again opened, and admitted the venerable figure of an old Franciscan monk. An expression of child-like purity and singular holiness lit up the old man's features, and justified the appellation of 'Il vero Santo,' given to the 'Ex-Custode dei Santi Luoghi' by all the poor dwellers in Jerusalem.

'God's blessing be with you, my poor Georgio!' he said softly; and then addressing the lady, added: 'Ah, my child, I thought I should find you here. The Marquise is waiting for you below.'

Pressing the hand of the sick boy, while she

knelt to receive the father's blessing, the lady passed swiftly down the stairs to her friend.

They re-enter the church, and passing by the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre, take their place in the Chapel of the Flagellation. Every Friday and Sunday a procession is formed in that chapel, the pilgrims bearing lighted tapers stamped with the pictures of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, and, singing a processional hymn peculiar to the Holy Land, visit each altar erected in commemoration of the Passion, reciting the Gospel and prayers applicable to each station. A portion of the column of Flagellation is exposed in the first chapel on the left of the altar, where the office begins; and so they move on to the dungeon, and to the place where they parted His vestments, down to the subterranean chapel or crypt where the rugged rocks remain as when first excavated, and where the sacred Cross was found; returning again to the Chapel of St. Helena above, with its venerable pillars and beautiful basket-work capitals, so admirably rendered in Roberts's famous drawing; then passing to the scene of the clothing in the purple robe and terrible crown of thorns, and so ascending to the Mount of Calvary, to which portion of the service a plenary indulgence is attached, while at the words 'Hic expiravit' the pilgrims prostrate themselves at the foot of the Cross; then again descending to the 'stone of unction,' where

the sacred Body was washed; thence to the sepulchre where It was laid, on to the place in the garden where He appeared to Mary Magdalen after the resurrection, and so back again to the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, where the office concludes with the touching Litany of Loreto.

It is a beautiful and solemn service, in which even Protestants are seen to join with unwonted fervour; and on this special day it was crowded to excess. When it was over, the two friends returned to the altar of St. Mary Magdalen, the words and tones of the hymn still lingering in their hearts:

'Jesu! dulce refugium,
Spes una Te quærentium,
Per Magdalenæ meritum
Peccati solve debitum.'

To those who are sorrowful and desponding at the sense of their own unworthiness and continual shortcomings, there is a peculiar attraction and help in the thoughts of this saint, apart from all the rest. The perfections of the Blessed Virgin dazzle us by their very brightness, and make us, as it were, despair of following her example. But in the Magdalen we have the picture of one who, like us, was tempted and sinned and fell, and yet, by the mercy of God and the force of the mighty love He put into her heart, was forgiven and accepted for the sake of that very love He had infused.

Presently the English stranger rose, and, ap-

proaching one of the Franciscan monks, begged for the benediction of her crucifix and other sacred objects, according to the short form in use at the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre; a privilege kindly and courteously granted to her. And now the shades of evening are darkening the aisles of the sacred building, and the pilgrims are gathered in a close and serried mass in the Chapel of Cavalry, waiting for the ceremony which is to close the solemn offices of that awful day. By the kindness of the Duke, who had been their companion in the Via Crucis, the two ladies were saved from the crowd, and conducted by a private staircase from the Greek chapel to the right of the altar of Calvary. The whole is soon wrapped in profound darkness, save where the light is thrown on a crucifix the size of life, erected close to the fatal spot. You might have fancied yourself alone but for the low murmur and swaying to and fro of the dense crowd kneeling on the floor of the chapel. Presently a Franciscan monk stepped forward, and, leaving his brethren prostrate at the foot of the altar, mounted on a kind of estrade at the back, and proceeded to detach the figure of our Blessed Lord from the cross. As each nail was painfully and slowly drawn out, he held it up, exclaiming, 'Ecce, dulces clavos!' exposing it at the same time to the view of the multitude, who, breathless and expectant, seemed riveted to the spot, with their upturned

faces fixed on the symbol represented to them. The supernatural and majestic stillness and silence of that great mass of human beings was one of the most striking features of the whole scene. Presently a ladder was brought, and the sacred figure lifted down, as in Rubens's famous picture of the 'Deposition,' into the arms of the monks at the foot of the cross. As the last nail was detached, and the head fell forward as of a dead body, a low deep sob burst from the very souls of the kneeling crowd. Tenderly and reverently the Franciscan Fathers wrapped it in fine linen, and placed it in the arms of the Patriarch, who kneeling received it, and carried it down to the Holy Sepulchre, the procession chanting the antiphon, 'Acceperunt Joseph et Nicodemus corpus Jesu; et ligaverunt illud linteis cum aromatibus, sicut mos est Judæis sepelire.' The crowd followed eagerly, yet reverently, the body to its last resting-place. It is a representation which might certainly be painful if not conducted throughout with exceeding care. But done as it is at Jerusalem, it can but deepen in the minds of all beholders the feelings of intense reverence, adoration, and awe with which they draw near to the scene of Christ's sufferings, and enable them more perfectly to realise the mystery of that terrible Passion which He bore for our sakes in His own Body on the tree.*

* F. Faber beautifully writes on this subject:—'It is hard to think

And with this touching ceremony the day is over; the crowd of pilgrims disperses, to meet on the morrow in the same spot for the more consoling offices of Easter-eve.

of the Passion not as an historical fact, or a mystery accomplished; but as a living, surviving Thing, a Power, a Presence, a Divine Energy; yet this last is the true view of it. Let us make a simple picture of the Passion for ourselves. We stand upon the low top of Calvary; there is a preternatural darkness, like the luminous gloom of an eclipse, all round us. There is silence there, only mingled with a few sounds; there were some people stirring in the darkness, yet only stirring as if afraid to move. It gradually grows lighter. The white houses of a city not far inland at the eastern end of the Mediterranean become visible. As the light waxes clearer, sounds increase both in number and in loudness. Slowly disclosed against the darkness is the Bloodless Body of the Son of God, indescribably venerable in the excess of its disfigurements, hanging on the Cross, facing the west, as if in prophecy of its grand Christian future. Standing beneath the Cross, now wet with blood, is the broken-hearted Mother of God, now also Mother of Men. There also is the Virgin Apostle St. John, with such impassioned calm upon his woe-worn features as his knowledge of the secrets of the Sacred Heart would be certain to imprint on them. Among all the sons of men there are few so great, so holy, so privileged, as he who by his beauty took captive the Human Heart of his Creator. There also is the glorious Magdalen, the brightest trophy of God's Love, which men take heart when they look upon, a very picture of the uttermost forlornness of human sorrow transfigured by the radiance of adoration into more than angelic beauty. O Magdalen! thou art there to tell us how the hopes of all men may be so bold as to take refuge upon Calvary! This is the Passion, the Passion consummated. That mystery on the hill-top is the fountain of all supernatural things, flowing both before and behind. Even the inanimate creation had some sort of consciousness that Calvary was the centre of the world, when, as old tradition held, the waters of the Deluge drifted thither the body of Adam and entombed it in the yielding soil . . . Look at Him on His lonely Cross. He hangs there, as it were, till the end of the world, but men fall off from the Crucifix, like a crowd at a fair, tired of some exciting show: all are busy, in the fields or on the roads, or keeping the feast at home; or clustered like Sunday idlers at the city gates. Jesus is left upon His mount alone!'—Posthumous Notes, in 2 vols.

But in many a heart the memory of this day will never be effaced; and will, it is humbly hoped, bear its life-long fruit in increased devotion to the sacred Humanity of their Lord and in greater detestation of those sins which could only be cancelled by so tremendous an atonement.

CHAPTER V.

MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK AT JERUSALEM.

THE early mass was over in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin. It is a sanctuary adjoining the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with a window looking into the Chapel of Calvary, and on this day it was unusually bright and beautiful, having been decked with fresh white lilies for the Easter Feast. Father Aloysius had locked the outer gate, and descending the steps, turned to one of the ladies waiting below, saying: 'We must make haste, it is past five o'clock, and our horses will be ready at the convent door. The city gates open before six to-day.' So speaking, the monk walked quickly up the street, followed by the lady. No English pilgrim to Jerusalem will ever hear the name of Father Aloysius (called in the convent 'Padre Luigi') without feelings of real gratitude and affectionate respect. Leaving his native country when very young to be educated at Rome, he decided, at eighteen years of age, to embrace the monastic habit in the austere Order of St. Francis.

EMMAUS.

Soon after making his last vows and on the eve of returning, as he hoped, to labour in his native country, the Superior of his convent called him one day into his room, and showed him a letter he had received from the Custode dei Santi Luoghi at Jerusalem, lamenting the want of any Father who could speak English, and assist the pilgrims of that country on their arrival in the Holy Land. Padre Luigi instantly saw in this mission the call of God, and, relinquishing all thoughts of home and ease, volunteered for the Holy Land mission, embracing with joy all its sufferings and privations. He has been there now for more than six years, and his health has greatly suffered; but his zeal and indefatigable kindness have made him invaluable for the work, and he will not yet claim his well-earned rest.

At the gate of the Casa Nuova horses and donkies were waiting, ready saddled for the travellers, while the Marquise de —— stood superintending the loading of certain articles of church furniture on a baggage-mule, with the assistance of a picturesque-looking boy, who was to act as their guide on the expedition. The little party mounted quickly, riding out of the Jaffa Gate, and, leaving the new Russian convent and church to the right, descended a steep hill on the road to Bethel. The day was beautiful, the rising sun was just gilding the tips of the hills, and the hill-sides were covered with the

most lovely spring flowers; dwarf irises, the delicate pink linum, crocuses, cistuses, called by the natives the 'Rose of Sharon,' and a variety of other plants, threw a tint of lilac, pink, and yellow, over the red and otherwise barren soil. In a month or so, all would be arid and burnt up; but in the early spring, the vegetation of the neighbourhood of Jerusalem must delight the heart of a painter. Half way the cavalcade came upon the ruins of what was once a church and a monastery at the base of a narrow gorge leading into a more open valley. Here the Marquise stopped: 'This is said to be the exact spot,' she said, 'where our Blessed Lord first met His two Disciples and communed with them "as they walked and were sad."' The English traveller dismounted to gather a beautiful spray of maiden-hair fern which grew close to a fountain, the only remains of civilisation in that place; and then the little party rode on in silence, musing on that 'talk by the way,' till a turn in the road brought them suddenly upon Emmaus, a fertile and smiling valley, with a little lake on one side, and with olive, fig, and apricot trees in full blossom on the other. On the right, is the hill on which stands the Church of Neby Samwel (now converted into a mosque), built by the Crusaders during their temporary occupation of the Holy Land, on the spot from whence they first beheld the Holy City. On the left, is another rising ground, from whence

there is a magnificent view of the whole plain from Emmaus to the sea: with Lydda and its ruined church, and Ramleh and its hospitable convent, and Jaffa, with its flat-roofed houses and bright orange groves glistening against the blue Mediterranean.

In the valley between these two hills stands the little hospice with the tiny belfry of the chapel which the piety of the Marquise has erected on the site of the house of Cleophas, and in the very spot 'where He was made known unto them in the breaking of bread.' The little cavalcade dismounted in the courtyard under the shade of a magnificent sycamore tree, and were warmly greeted by an old lay brother. 'All is ready, madame, and the Padre —— is arrived,' he said, turning to the Marquise, 'but we want the candles.' 'I have brought them,' was the reply, and, taking the things from the baggage-mule, the two ladies followed the good frate and Padre Luigi into the little chapel. A beautiful white marble altar had been imported from Naples, under which was a kind of alcove into which the Marquise fitted an oil-painting of our Saviour and His two Disciples, which had likewise been executed in Italy. After arranging the flowers, candles, and other ornaments of the altar, the ladies knelt in silent prayer; the priest entered; the Virgin mass was said, and the unbloody sacrifice offered for the first time, perhaps, on that spot since 'the eyes of the Disciples were opened, and they knew Him'

before 'He vanished out of their sight.' Never did the words of the *Gradual* appear more appropriate than at that moment: '*Hæc dies quam fecit Dominus, exultemus et lætemur in ea;*' and, again, '*Victimæ Paschali laudes immolent Christiani!*' Tears ran down the cheeks of the Marquise as she offered up her thanksgivings to Him who had thus crowned with success her labour of love. 'How thankful and happy you must feel,' exclaimed the Englishwoman to her friend, as half an hour later they were breakfasting under the shade of a wide-spreading fig-tree in the little garden of the hospice. 'Yes, my child,' replied the Marquise, 'I am very thankful, but much remains to be done, and my means are completely exhausted. The hospice is unfinished, there is only one room habitable. I hope, when you go back to Europe, you will try and interest your friends in the work, so that I may have the joy, before I die, of seeing it completed.' 'One reads one's Gospel with a new sense,' continued her companion, 'on days like these, in the very spots where the actual events have happened. When I think how many saints have desired to see these things, and yet that God has denied them the privilege, I cannot be grateful enough for His great mercy to me.' 'I want you to see another favourite haunt of mine,' replied the Marquise, 'on our way back to Jerusalem, the Convent of the Visitation, where St. John the Baptist was born, and the house where

Elisabeth saluted the Blessed Virgin. I go there every summer, when my yearly fever compels me to seek a purer air in the "hill country." So, if you have finished your sketch, we will start at once.' The Englishwoman hastily put up her drawing materials, and in a few moments the little party were again in the saddle, and descending the steep hill which leads to the village of San Giovanni in Montana. The road got worse and worse every moment: the rugged and uneven track, like the bed of a torrent, where there had been, at any rate, here and there, a place for the horses' hoofs, gave way to smooth slabs, which, in descending the steep ravines, seemed quite impassable for man or beast. The Englishwoman dismounted and tried to walk. 'You will find that your horse can manage it better than you,' said Padre Luigi, smiling: and so she was soon convinced, for she simply could not keep her footing; while her horse, first smelling the slippery slabs, put his two hind feet together and then slid down the incline, scrambling himself up again at the bottom. The intelligence and sure-footedness of these Syrian animals are wonderful. On first arriving in the Holy Land, even the most courageous of pilgrims look with dismay at the paths they have to follow, and wonder what can have become of the roads and the chariots so often alluded to in Holy Scripture. But after a few days, they learn to shut their eyes, and trust to their

horses, or rather to the good Providence of God, who so wonderfully preserves the lives of His followers. After an hour's painful scrambling, the travellers wound up a steep hill, and came suddenly on the Convent and Church of the Visitation, built on the ruins of the house of Zachary, in a beautiful position overlooking the whole valley. Dismounting and entering the church for a few moments of prayer, they passed into the Convent of the Franciscan Fathers, where the usual hospitable welcome awaited them. They then walked quickly along a path raised by the side of the stream which ran through the village, and under an over-hanging rock and by a fountain called 'of the Madonna,' where some handsome native girls were washing, to a little sanctuary on the road side, the spot, where, by human lips, as before by those of an angel, the Immaculate Virgin was again declared to be 'Blessed among women.' It is a kind of little chapel hollowed out of the rock, and, at present, destitute of all ornament, save an altar at one end, where mass is occasionally performed. The little party knelt instinctively to repeat together the 'Magnificat,' and then turned into the adjoining convent, which is the country orphanage of the 'Filles de Sion.' They have about forty children in this house, whose health would not stand the climate of Jerusalem, and they teach them all kinds of industrial work. With loving greeting, the Superior and her sisters wel-

comed the pilgrims, bringing them lemonade and fresh water from the Madonna's fountain, and showing them all over their orphanage. 'About an hour's ride from this convent,' said the Marquise, 'is the Desert of St. John the Baptist, where the rock is still shown from which he is said to have preached "the baptism of repentance and the remission of sins." But we have not time to visit it to-day.' Remounting, they rode as quickly as the road would allow through a valley where the air was scented with aromatic shrubs, to the church of San Giovanni della Croce, which has now been converted into a Greek monastery for the education of priests. In the church are some curious and very ancient frescoes in tolerable preservation; but it is chiefly interesting from the tradition that on this site grew the tree from which the wood of the Cross was made on which hung the Saviour of Mankind.

The road here improved, and, cantering quickly up the last steep ravine, they found themselves once more at the gates of the Holy City.

It was two o'clock. The church of St. Salvador was crowded. The beautiful silver altar, with its richly carved figures, was uncovered, and on the floor, on which were squatted a multitude of women covered up with their white 'abbas' (for the Syrian women can rarely be taught to kneel) knelt the loving sisters of St. Joseph de l'Apparition, and

around them about 120 children, of different ages and sizes singing the beautiful Vesper Hymn :

'O Filii et filiæ,
Rex celestis, Rex gloriæ,
Morte surrexit hodie.'

Benediction followed, and then the sisters and the Englishwoman, marshalling the children in the corridor of the convent church, walked with them through the narrow street, and out of the Jaffa Gate, past the poor lepers, begging as usual on the way-side, down the steep ravine, and, leaving on the left the Jewish Hospital erected by the charity of Sir Moses Montefiore, wound up the hill again to a beautiful rose garden, close to which two tents were pitched. The children, dressed, some in the uniform of the orphanage, some in their picturesque native costume, with their dark eyes peeping out of their white 'abbas,' were ranged in rows on the flowery bank; and out of the tents were borne great baskets of cakes and a kind of 'pasticcie' much favoured by Syrian children, with oranges and other fruit; while from a neighbouring caffè quantities of little cups of coffee were rapidly brought and distributed with the cakes to the children. This school feast was to have been given on St. Joseph's day, in honour of the patron of the orphanage; but the festival falling this year in Lent, it had been put off till after Easter. It was a very pretty sight, and one rare and strange to the dwellers

in Jerusalem. When the eating and drinking were over, pictures and rosaries were distributed among the children; and then their games began and their merry voices were heard echoing down the hill-sides. A little Nubian monkey, belonging to the kind occupants of the tents, contributed immensely to the amusements of the girls, stealing their coffee and cakes, and running up the cords of the tent and then throwing down the empty cups, from pure mischief, on the little heads below.

The Superior, leaving the sisters to share in the dances and games of the little ones, went and sat down with the stranger under the shade of the tent. 'You do not look well, dear lady,' said the mother. 'I am afraid you have overtired yourself.' 'I shall make you the same answer that the Superior of the Filles de Sion did to me yesterday,' replied the lady, 'when I was condoling with her on her delicate health: "Il faut toujours porter la croix à Jérusalem." But now I am rested, let us go back to the children.' 'No; you must be under obedience, for once,' said the mother, smiling, 'and stay here quietly till it is time to return home; the children do not want you now.' And so they sat on and talked of Rome and of the dear saint-like Mère Émilie, who had begun this orphanage at Jerusalem, and who now, in the Piazza Margana at Rome, is carrying on a similar work of love, and training orphan children for Christ. And so the time passed,

till the setting sun warned them that they must go back if they did not want to be shut out of the city gates.

Again the little band was marshalled, and the happy children and sisters retraced their steps. At the house of the Syrian Bishop, the Englishwoman stopped. 'I shall see you to-night, to say "good bye," shall I not?' asked she. 'Surely,' replied the mother. So saying, they parted, the sisters and children winding up the narrow street which led to their convent, while the stranger bent her steps alone towards the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Once more she knelt in that sacred shrine, and by that awful Cross, and by that open Grave. Much of her time in Jerusalem had been spent within those walls. There she had passed the vigil of Easter Day, watching the whole night through; and in those twelve hours of silent prayer she felt she had learned more than in all her life besides. And now she was to leave those spots, so hallowed and so endeared to her, perhaps *for ever*, and, in spite of her efforts at self-restraint, tears fell thick on the floor as she knelt. 'You will come back to us some day, my child; I feel sure of it,' said Padre Luigi, who, unperceived, had come close to her, and saw her face. 'See, I have brought you what you asked for; it will last you a long time.' The lady thanked him with a grateful smile, and turned with sorrowful reluctance from the Holy Places.

With a strong effort, she rejoined a merry English party outside the gates, and prepared to do the honours of the evening, at a dinner to be given to those who had so kindly and courteously smoothed for her all the difficulties of her journey.

And now the evening was over. The last directions for the journey on the morrow had been given, and once more the faithful 'Cawass,' with his solemn mien and silver stick, marshalled the traveller from the hotel up the steep streets to her convent home. There an unexpected greeting awaited her. Every one in the convent had brought her some little offering—from the Custode dei Santi Luoghi, who presented her with a beautiful cross carved out of the wood of the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, down to the humblest frate, who presented her with the olive berries he had himself dried and strung—shells of Bethlehem, rosaries, relics, fragments of the Holy Places, dried flowers from sacred spots, all precious remembrances, both for their own sakes and for those of the givers,—covered the little table in her cell. She accepted each and all with an overflowing heart, and, kneeling, received the parting blessing of the Custode, together with her cross and certificate as pilgrim, and a permission, almost equally valued, that Padre L. should accompany the travellers on their Syrian journey. And now the sisters of St. Joseph appeared, and insisted on clearing the room,

that the lady might be left to the repose she so much needed; and so, with the echo of their kind and loving words still ringing in her ears, she slept for the last time in her little convent bed in the Holy City.

BETHLEHEM.

CHAPTER VI.

BETHLEHEM.

A LONG and straggling cavalcade was winding up the steep rocky path which leads from the Dead Sea to the Convent of Mar Saba. Its members had tented the night before in the fertile plains near Jericho close to Elisha's fountain. In the early morning they had drunk and bathed in the waters of Jordan, and pictured to themselves that miraculous passage of the host of Israel, and, still more vividly, that awful and mysterious Baptism, when the pure and holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, conformed Himself in His human nature to the outward rite, that in all things He might be to us an example and guide. They had seen in the distance the ruins of Bethabara, where St. John the Baptist commenced his preaching; the solitude which witnessed the terrible temptations of St. Jerome; and the desert where St. Mary of Egypt expiated by a life of penance the sins of her youth. And now the guides pointed out Mount Abarim, from whence Moses contemplated the Promised Land, and Mount Nebo, where he died. Rapidly they had passed by

the desolate shores of that sea which, lying like a calm Swiss lake, with its purple-tinted mountains, in its quiet loveliness, yet breathes nothing but bitterness and desolation to those who venture in or near its waters.* A beautiful large yellow flower with a dark eye was growing close to the water's edge, and one of the ladies stooped to pick it; but it was almost dashed from her hand by the Bedouin guide, with the exclamation 'Poison' in Arabic; so that nothing, animal or vegetable, fit for food or human use, seems to be found near that terrible Dead Sea, on which the curse of centuries rests! And now the cavalcade is toiling on, amid magnificent scenery, up the steep ascent, the burning sun making the way appear longer,

* Father Faber's description of the Dead Sea exceeds in beauty as in fidelity any other which ever was written. It is as follows:—'The scene now—the intense blue—the violet haze—the lifeless waters with no life but the bitterness of God's anger in them—sparkling, spiked crystals of salt—yellow-foliaged canes as if it were always autumn there—salt-frosted plants and leafless ragged shrubs of thorny acacia—the ragged limestone clefts upon the west—and on the east, the red mountains of Moab, as if they were on fire in the summer sunset—sunk in the hollow-caverned trough, that eye of shining water looks up through its violet haze to heaven; and the sun burnishes it—and the moon silvers it—and the stars shine deep down into it—and the winds ripple it—and the rain patters upon it in beaded drops—and the scene itself is a silent worship of the magnificent anger of our Heavenly Father. There is no horror in the place, only an inward gloom of heart in spite of the outward radiance of the landscape. It is as if God had painted a picture of the Universal Doom, and then had drawn this weary brightness of silent desolation like a curtain over the horrors of the painting. O! terrible beauty! O! terrible sunshine of that blue Dead Sea! God's majesty never cows us more than when it looks so imperturbable!' (*Posthumous Notes.*)

and a parching thirst compelling the travellers to an unwary emptying of their 'zemzymiahs' (or leather water-bottles) before half the day is over. They have a wild and picturesque escort of fifty men, some mounted and some on foot, all in the Bedouin dress—the wide striped brown and white burnous and black kaffir—with long hair and naked feet and legs. They are armed with long old-fashioned guns bound with brass and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and with sundry other weapons in their girdles. Not a tree or a bush appears to give a particle of shade to the sunburnt pilgrims, and the younger of the party are beginning to feel faint and dispirited, when a turn of the road brings them to a great projecting rock, and they see that, by scrambling down a ravine in the hollow below, they shall find a resting-place during the burning heat of noon-day. In a few moments they had dismounted, and stretched themselves on their carpets in the grateful shade. 'The shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Who has not felt, in the East, the wonderful beauty and reality of the similes used in Holy Scripture? Were any one seeking for a guide-book of Syria, of its scenery, its manners, its customs, they could find no more accurate one than that which God has placed in the hands of all men by the mouth of His prophets. There still are the women watering the cattle by the wayside well, and kneading the cakes on the hearth,

and preparing the fatted kid for the traveller by the open tent-door. There, again, is the grass growing upon the house-tops, 'which withereth before it be plucked up.' Nothing is changed in this wonderful land, except where the blighting foot of the Turk has come, and left the usual desolation behind.

But the breathing-time allowed to our travellers was fated to be of short duration. The scouts on the hills around gave notice of the vicinity of a hostile tribe of Bedouins, who had come from 'the other side Jordan,' intent on plunder. Only last year, two English ladies and a Franciscan father, who had unwittingly strayed away from their escort, were captured and carried off by some of this tribe. Of the fate of the ladies nothing is known. The Franciscan contrived to write his history on a stone, and, giving it to a Bedouin going to Jerusalem, persuaded him to take it to the convent, assuring him that it was a stone of value, on the receipt of which a handsome reward would be given by the *custode*. The Bedouin duly delivered the stone, and so the place of the poor father's captivity was discovered; and, on a given day, when he had been sent in the capacity of a slave to tend the flocks on this side Jordan, he was rescued by a party sent from Jerusalem for the purpose. With this warning before them, our travellers lost not a moment in regaining their saddles,

and moved rapidly onwards. One of their party had left something behind, and was beginning to retrace his steps, when, on turning round the corner of the rock they had left only a few moments before, he discovered that every shrub and stone had concealed a hostile Bedouin, who had sprung up, like Roderick Dhu's men, the moment the caravan had disappeared, and were now evidently planning a pursuit. Quickening their pace, therefore, the travellers arrived at a rising ground, where their guides advised a halt, while they reconnoitred the force and dispositions of the enemy below. Some Bedouin boys were tending a flock of goats on this mound; but they surlily and flatly refused to allow any of the party to purchase their milk. From this eminence a glorious panorama was obtained of the road they had already traversed, with the Dead Sea, and the wilderness of St. John, and the plains of Jericho, and the hills of Moab; but in a square, on one side of the plain, were the long low black camel's hair tents of the hostile Bedouins—a sight which did not tend to reassure our travellers. Presently they saw a movement in the hostile camp. A body of men galloped forward to meet the escort, and a few shots were fired; but only one or two men were wounded; and after half an hour's parley, the matter (which really related less to the travellers than to a 'raid' of cattle the previous day by the tribe of whom their escort was

composed) was amicably arranged, and the cavalcade resumed its march. Their sufferings from thirst, however, were on the increase. Long ago they had been compelled to drink the Jordan water, which, encased in the flat tin pilgrim's bottles, they had meant so carefully to preserve for their return home; and now they came upon a dirty and half-dried pool, to which they hastened as to a refreshing well, and struggled with the horses and mules for a share in the muddy and brackish water. Another hour's ride brought them to Mar Saba, that beautiful convent founded by St. Saba, whose name it bears, perched on the summit of the gorge, with a deep ravine on one side, and endless caverns in the rocks on the other, where the Anchorites, in the early days of the Church, lived the lives of angels more than of men. At one time it is said that there were more than 11,000 monks congregated in this spot, under the direction of one Superior. Here St. Jerome came, before he settled at Bethlehem, and here St. John Damascene ended his life of penance and of prayer. The Saracens in the twelfth century massacred all the religious they could find: but the convent was rebuilt on the same beautiful spot, and is now occupied by the Greeks. Their rule is a very austere one, and on no pretext will they admit women within their walls; so that our travellers tented on a small level sward just outside the convent-

gates, the monks supplying them with fresh water and excellent bread. One of the party, whose sex offered no obstacle to a closer inspection of the convent, describes it as follows :—

'It is not a single building, but rather a vast collection of chambers and galleries, built on the almost precipitous sides of a rocky ravine, which here overhangs the torrent bed of the river Kedron. The situation is most picturesque ; but it is a wonderful feat of architectural skill to have piled up such huge masses of masonry, which seem rather to cleave to the bare rock than to be supported from below. Although the upper front, at which we entered, seems to be the only place where nature has not provided sufficient fortification, a massive wall surrounds the whole of the convent. Notwithstanding, too, all the strength, both natural and artificial, of the position, Mar Saba has been several times, during its long history of nearly 1,400 years, sacked by Persian, Saracenic, and other Moslem invaders ; but it is sufficiently strong to repel the attacks of marauding Bedouins, which from time to time occur. We were met at the entrance by one of the monks, who conducted us by a series of continually descending staircases and corridors, through towers, and over the roofs of halls and chapels, till we reached the lower part of the convent, which stands immediately over the ravine. Here we were shown the tomb of St. Saba, which

is a small plain chapel; but the monks told us that the body of the saint had been removed by the Crusaders to Venice. Within a few yards of this chapel is the principal church of the convent, which, though of no very great size, is a handsome building, and most richly decorated. The walls are covered with ancient pictures, many of them adorned with silver and precious stones. There are also a considerable number of massive silver candelabra, some of which were pointed out to us as a gift from Russia. With some difficulty, and after considerable hesitation on the part of the monks, we obtained access to the library, a little room off the church. It is very seldom shown to strangers, and though Mr. Curzon visited it some twenty-five years ago, few Franks have been allowed to enter it since. Three of the manuscripts are said, and I believe truly, to be fully 1,200 years old. They are the Gospels in Greek, the works of St. Chrysostom, and a copy of the sixteen Prophets in Greek. The last is said to have been written as far back as the middle of the sixth century of the Christian era, and is one of the most valuable manuscripts in the world. It has in it an inscription in Greek signifying "most valuable book," evidently written by some European traveller, perhaps Mr. Curzon. We were then led to the Guest Chamber, a large well-furnished room, where we were hospitably received by the Superior. We were served with no food,

but with a variety of drinks—water, coffee, wine, lemonade, &c., and, strange to say, *aqua vitæ*, for, though the monks never eat flesh, they admit spirits into the convent. The monks of Mar Saba are sixty-two in number, and seem, for the most part, to be taken from the lower class. We certainly found them, though hospitable in their own way, very inferior in general learning, intelligence, and courtesy, to the Latin monks of Palestine, such as the Franciscans at Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other places. Several of the monks of the convent employ themselves in carving crosses, spoons, and sticks out of wood from the Jordan and orange wood, which they sell to travellers. All the money thus earned goes to the common fund of the convent; but abuses have crept in from this habit, and the rule of holy poverty and community of goods was flagrantly broken through the other day by one of the religious, who, dying suddenly, sixty two gold pieces were found concealed in his cell! Let us hope, however, that this instance was an exception to the general behaviour of the Order, whose life appears one of great privation and austerity.'

The following morning the whole party proceeded down a steep descent into a smiling valley, with fruit-trees in full blossom, which contrasted wonderfully with the sombre though magnificent scenery through which they had passed in coming from the Dead Sea to Mar Saba.

Jerusalem is, and ever must be, steeped with melancholy in its aspect, in its *entourage*, in its interior, in all its associations. But Bethlehem, to which the travellers were now rapidly approaching, is, of all the towns of Syria, the gayest and the brightest. Here alone are seen beautiful women with unveiled and uncovered faces, for no Turk resides in Bethlehem. Ibrahim Pasha, in a freak of tyrannical fury, turned every Mahometan out of the city, and rased their houses to the ground. It is therefore a purely Christian population, and a marked difference is instantly perceptible. Weary and exhausted with the heat, the party found themselves at last at the gateway of the Franciscan convent, which is on a kind of eminence overlooking the rest of the town. One must have been in the East to realise the joy and thankfulness with which those crossed and stigmated hands are welcomed by the traveller. On whatever door or gateway these are affixed (together with the five crosses which are their additional badge in the Holy Land) there are not only refreshment and rest, but kindness and thoughtfulness and Christian courtesy of the highest order, extended alike to Catholics and Protestants; a charity asking for no return save such as the heart of the pilgrim may dispose him to give towards the support of those more needy than himself, and a gentle consideration for both the bodily and spiritual wants of their

guests, which few but the children of St. Francis could show. In this instance the monks vied with each other in welcoming the weary pilgrims, and affording them the refreshment and rest they so sorely needed. Deliciously cool lemonade and Turkish coffee preceded the more substantial evening meal; while the tempting white beds in the pilgrims' dormitory, each surmounted with its simple pilgrim's wooden cross, invited the repose which the long day's fatigue had earned.

It was three o'clock in the morning following their arrival when one of the party, leaving the others to their rest, stole softly down the stairs and through the long corridor to a low door, which she pushed open, and found herself in the Greek basilica built originally by the Empress Helena. Passing swiftly with her little lamp through its aisles, she descended by a flight of steps to a chapel where a succession of beautiful hanging lamps threw a vivid light on a bright brass star sunk in the floor. The lady knew the way well; she had already been there the preceding evening with Padre Luigi; but she felt an irresistible desire to revisit those sacred spots alone, and to strive to realise better that wonderful and joyful Mystery. It was revealed to Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament that everything which happened on that wonderful night eighteen hundred years ago in the cave of Bethlehem took place *in silence* and

without a word; and so she felt that in silence alone could she adore and venerate that Mother and that Son.

On the left is the chapel where the star which had 'gone before' the Wise Men in the East 'came and stood over the place where the Child was.' On the right is the Altar of the Adoration of the Magi; and in a recess, down two or three steps more, is the Altar of the Manger—the very site of the *sacra culla* where the Holy Babe was laid. To the right of this altar is a little passage and a door leading first to the Altar of the Holy Innocents—those first-fruits of His Nativity—and then to the cave where St. Jerome lived and wrote and died. A little further on is the cell of St. Paula, his fellow-worker and the first foundress of the hospice for pilgrims to this shrine.

If in Jerusalem the heart of the pilgrim is awed and arrested by the horrors of Calvary, and scarcely soothed by the thoughts of the repose of the Holy Sepulchre, at Bethlehem he can feel nothing but joy and thankfulness and love and amazement at the love which could clothe itself in such humility. Yet the sting of the Passion is even here. The night is very cold, yet it is March now; and three months before, the bitter wind and damp chill of the cave must have been far less endurable. It was December when the infant Jesus was laid there, in the rough and prickly straw; to teach us, as St.

Peter Damian says, the mortification of our senses. He came from heaven to teach us the love of suffering; He laid down from His birth the law of martyrdom in daily life—that law which all His saints have followed until now.

Thoughts like these thronged in the heart of the Englishwoman as she knelt, and felt that the 'little Babe of Bethlehem' can be nowhere understood as on the very spot where the mystery was wrought. Year after year she had prepared the *crèche* which was to picture the scene to the hearts of her children. She had knelt by the shrine in the beautiful church of Sta. Maria Maggiore, and, by papal permission, beheld the sacred cradle exposed to the veneration of the faithful; but all ideas, all representations fade before the spot itself,—that spot, untouched and unchanged after the lapse of centuries—that spot which witnessed the mystery concealed from the evil one—that mystery of love—that miracle of humility.

And now other steps are heard descending those stairs. A man venerable, both in age and appearance, with the insignia of a bishop, followed by two black attendants and a Franciscan monk, is come to say the four-o'clock mass at the Altar of the Manger. For two months had he travelled painfully and on foot through his distant diocese in the heart of the continent of Africa, to reach the seaport which would enable him to embark for the Holy

Land and perform this arduous pilgrimage. And now for the first time he offers the Holy Sacrifice in that sacred shrine; and at the *Gloria in excelsis* tears rain down his cheeks, and almost stop his utterance. It needed but this to complete the touching picture which had been forming itself in the heart of the English lady.

A few days before, while travelling, they had stopped with other pilgrims at a wayside kahn, and on going in for a few moments, saw a peasant mother take her child and place it in a manger where some oxen were feeding; and this was identical with the scene of the Nativity and the act of the Blessed Virgin on that eventful night. All came back to her mind then; and with the recollection of this simple action was mingled the thought of the Magi, one of whom appeared as if before her in the person of the black Abyssinian acolyte, whom the venerable Bishop of Central Africa had brought in his train. 'And so God came as a little child to cast the fire of His love into our hearts,' says St. Alphonsus de Liguori in his beautiful Meditation on the Nativity—'O Ignis, qui semper ardes, accende me!'

That Mass is over, and others follow, and the little chapel is thronged with worshippers. But the Englishwoman heeds them not: kneeling in an angle of the chapel, with the Epistles of St. Jerome in her hand, she is reading that portion so affect-

ingly descriptive of the scene before her—in that very 'little grot of Bethlehem in which,' he writes, 'God speaks familiarly and converses with His children.' She feels as if she could never leave this spot, or cease to remember the thoughts it has called forth. But the morning wore on: and Padre Luigi summoned her to visit another sanctuary, less interesting than the one she was leaving, yet very useful in filling up the last touches of the day's meditation. It was the field where 'the shepherds kept watch over their flocks by night,' a simple field about a quarter of an hour's walk from the convent-gates, and in that field a little chapel has been built, to which you descend by a flight of steps. Faber says, very beautifully, that 'the shepherds represent the place which simplicity occupies in the kingdom of Christ; for next to that of Mary and Joseph theirs was the first external service offered to the new-born Babe of Bethlehem.'

On returning to the convent the travellers once more mounted, and, passing through the rugged streets, rode to Beit-Jala, the residence and seminary of the patriarch, Monsignor Valerga; a building beautifully situated in the midst of olive-groves and vineyards, and reminding them more of Italy than anything they had yet seen in Palestine. After seeing both the convent and the students, and passing by a picturesque fountain—where the Bethlehem women, in their bright-blue petticoats

and scarlet bodices and snowy-white head-dresses, courteously offered cups of water to the travellers —they rode on by a rough and toilsome path to another point of pilgrimage,—the fountain where Philip baptized the Eunuch. There is still water in it, and a kind of rude attempt has been made to enclose the upper portion with a circular wall. Returning, they took the Jerusalem road, which brought them back to Bethlehem, by Rachel's Tomb —that place so dear to all Jewish hearts. It is a modern well, with a dome; but the site is unquestioned and preserved by unbroken tradition. From thence, passing again by the convent-gates, the party wound down a steep hill, and arrived after a ride of about two miles at Solomon's Pools. They are three great reservoirs, built of squared stones, and supply Bethlehem with water now, as they formerly did Jerusalem. A great square Turkish castle stands at the head of the Upper Pool, inhabited by a few irregular troops, and wild ducks of various kinds were disporting themselves on the surface of the water. From thence they proceeded by a winding glen to visit Solomon's Gardens, at Urtas; and after scrambling down a rough irregular road, which brought them literally on the roofs of the houses in the village, came suddenly on a spot which appeared all pink and lilac from the mass of peach-blossom and other flowering fruit-trees in this happy valley. A little

stream irrigates the whole line of gardens; and the luxuriance of the flowers, fruits, and vegetables proves what might be done with this soil if only a little pains were taken in its cultivation. One of the owners of the gardens brought them some delicious honey, with fresh salad and fruits, which our travellers eat thankfully, sitting in one of the lovely peach-orchards by the side of the rushing stream.

A well-known English lady and authoress has purchased a portion of this garden ground with the idea eventually, it is said, of building upon it and returning in her old age to rest in Holy Land. May her desire be realised!*

And now the evening shadows warn them to return to their convent home, for the inhabitants of Urtas have not a good reputation after nightfall. Riding quickly, they arrived in time to walk a little about the streets of Bethlehem and visit some of the workshops, where the shells and Crosses of mother-of-pearl are manufactured in such quantities for the pilgrims, and sold in the outer court of St. Helena's Basilica, as well as in Jerusalem. And then they wished good-bye to the little town with its irregular streets and quaint houses and bright and genial population; and afterwards, a still more sorrowful farewell to the sacred shrine

* While this was passing through the press, the melancholy tidings reached the writer of her having found her rest indeed! but not at Urtas.

and its kind and hospitable Franciscan guardians. The good old Superior, whose labours were so soon to end on earth, good-naturedly gave to one of the party the Bethlehem 'Pilgrim's Cross,' the same in material and design as those given to such of the visitors to Jerusalem as had their feet washed by the patriarch on Holy Thursday; and with this remembrance and a last mass at the altar of the manger, sunny little Bethlehem was exchanged for the rough road leading to the gloomy and fanatical city of Hebron.

CHAPTER VII.

HEBRON.

THE following morning our travellers had made their arrangements to start at daybreak for Hebron. But there was a difficulty first about horses, and then about saddles, so that it was six o'clock before they found themselves riding out of the convent gates, and once more down the steep and rugged road which led to Solomon's Pool. From thence the ground ascends continually till you come to Tekoa, the birthplace of the prophet Amos, close to which are some rather extensive ruins said to be those of 'The House of Abraham,' and afterwards of a Christian basilica. On the hill close by, called 'Gebel el Batrak,' the patriarch Abraham is supposed to have stood when he received the promise as to his seed.

Here, the rude remains of the old Roman road winding up and down the bare brown hills, becomes exchanged for a better track, with occasional cantering ground, of which the younger portion of the party did not fail to profit. The country they were traversing gave evidence of careful cultivation

at some former time; and vines trailed over every low wall, while carouba and olive-trees lined the mountain sides, and terebinth or evergreen oak here and there gave a grateful shade. This was the far-famed Valley of Eshcol, and on turning round the sharp corner of a hill, Hebron burst upon them, with its domed white stone houses perched on a rising ground, and the great wall and minaret of the 'Haram' towering above the whole. This then was Hebron; the resting-place of Abraham and all the Patriarchs; the 'royal city'—associated with the earliest and most sacred traditions of the Chosen People. It is the most ancient city in Palestine, rivalling Damascus in point of interest as in antiquity. 'On these hill-sides,' writes Mr. Tristram, 'and in the valleys below, Abraham walked and communed with God; and the dust of the Patriarchs moulders in the cave beneath those huge walls.' Later, it became a Levitical city, and here again David was anointed king over the House of Judah.

Our travellers tented under the well-known tree called 'Abraham's Oak;' the pilgrim's knife has done its best to destroy it and spoil its beauty. Yet enough remains to give a pleasant shade. The stem measures over twenty-two feet, and the foliage is thick and luxuriant. Here Abraham sat at his tent door in the heat of the day when he

received the angels' visit; and here Sarah died and was buried in the famous Cave of Machpelah, now so jealously guarded from all but Moslem eyes.

The travellers, weary with their long ride, laid down quietly on their carpets outside the tent in the shade, reading Dean Stanley's admirable description of the interior of the mosque, which by a rare privilege he had been allowed to enter; and reserved their visit to the town for the following day. But towards sunset they took a walk through a succession of terraces carefully cultivated, and at that moment full of vegetables and fruit-trees in full bloom, to the 'Pool of David,' a square tank at the bottom of the valley full of rain-water, which irrigates all the neighbouring gardens in summer time.

The next morning they started early for the town, crossing a picturesque bridge, and finding themselves passing through a gateway into a long, narrow, ill-paved street, leading into a bazaar, with a surly and hostile-looking population silently watching them as they proceeded in single file towards the Haram. Here they dismounted and passed up the first part of the staircase leading to the outer court of the mosque, when they were somewhat rudely turned back, and had to content themselves with making a circuit of the outside. The Crusaders, in

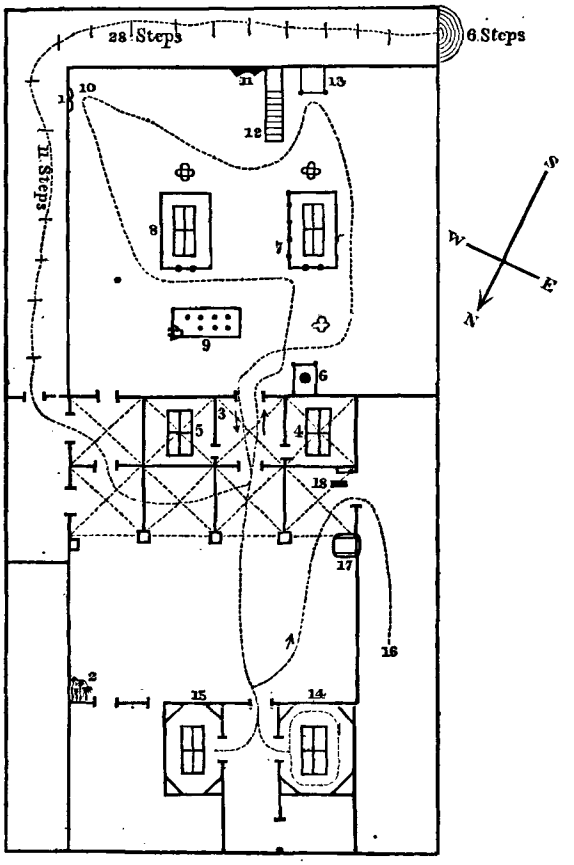
the twelfth century, built a basilica over the cave; but that was converted into a mosque, which it remains to this day. The blank wall which encloses it is 200 feet long by 115 wide, and 50 feet high, without a single window or loophole. The massive stones of the exterior are like those of the Jews' wailing place at Jerusalem, only still larger; and leave on the mind the same impression of intense antiquity, simplicity, and grandeur. Passing into a courtyard above the mosque, with a picturesque fountain in the centre, some of the party tried to peep into the enclosure below; but even the advantageous position of being on a hill-side above the sacred building, does not enable one to gratify one's curiosity. By the kindness of Lord Bute, however, the following graphic account of his entrance into the mosque is here inserted, which will be as deeply interesting as the one previously published by Dean Stanley :—

'Rasheya, Sept. 16, 1866.

'This day fortnight I, with a Mr. G. and a Dr. H., entered the Mosque at Hebron. As we made a very careful and leisurely visit, and made a plan on the spot, and copied an inscription never before read . . . I stimulate myself on this exceedingly hot day to prepare an account of it for you. . . . When at Constantinople we got a firman from the Sultan, and at Jerusalem put it into the hands of the pasha.

That dignitary told us that, for safety, he would try to make our visit coincide with an expedition which he himself was obliged to make to Hebron about that time. We first intended to visit the Mosque on the morning of Friday, August 31, but were warned that that day (which is the Muslim Sabbath) would not be safe. Saturday also was reckoned uncertain, and so our visit fell on the Sunday. We arrived on Saturday at Hebron and pitched our tents among the olives near the Quarantine above the cemetery, being nearly the spot whence the view is taken in Smith's Dictionary. The pasha arrived during the night with some 100 horsemen, and took up his abode in the Quarantine. Next morning, about 6.30, came the mayor of the town and the head of the police, with whom we sat some time drinking coffee and smoking. They were quite civil, and assured us there would be no disturbance. About 7 we walked with them to the town, accompanied by about twenty irregular soldiers, apparently simple roughs. My servants asked to come, but I refused. As we passed one or two streets leading to the Haram hardly any one appeared. Of those that did, several saluted the authorities. We saw one or two knots of little boys (who always follow Christians, cursing and reviling them in the streets of this town), but our people drove them away.

'Now, that you may understand, here is our plan of the Mosque, which I do assure you is quite faithful, and made on the spot.



1. Stone thirty spans long. 2. Young palms. 3. Vestibule. 4. Tomb of Abraham. 5. Tomb of Sarah. 6. Hole. 7. Tomb of Isaac. 8. Tomb of Rebecca. 9. Siddeh. 10. Greek Inscription. 11. Mehrâb. 12. Mimbar. 13. Door of Cave. 14. Tomb of Jacob. 15. Tomb of Leah. 16. Corridor. 17. Fountain. 18. Black Stone, where a man read the Kurân.

'We first ascended six steps and then took off our shoes. Then we entered on the ascent of twenty-eight broad low steps of polished stone, with the

Titanic Jewish wall on our left and some houses on our right. At the foot of them I was introduced to the sheykh. He was an excessively pleasing person, about thirty-five years of age, and had that refined and pious look which so often charms one in educated and devout Muslims, amounting almost to asceticism. His manner was grave to sadness, but extremely well-bred. We passed a turning to the left, and felt we had entered the mysterious precincts. Here was a part of the way arched over, and in the Hebrew wall some vast stones. Passing up eleven broad steps, we reached a wall and gateway with inscriptions from the Kurán. The sheykh evaded translating them, and I was told they probably contained something adverse to Christianity. Passing this gate, we entered a long empty matted corridor; immediately on the left was a large iron door, closed. This door was opened from within, after some time and with difficulty. We entered, and crossed a small vestibule, white and neatly matted, and entered, to the right, the great colonnade, erst the porch of the church. We here saw the court, which, as well as the colonnade, is paved with polished stone.

'In the north-east corner are some young palms, whose vivid green relieves the eye charmingly. The north side appeared to be buildings, the east and west blank walls; south was the colonnade. This colonnade has an arched groined roof, white-

washed and painted with dark red and blue ornaments, much defaced. We advanced a little and entered a small matted dingy dark vestibule, panelled with inlaid marbles in bold patterns, and filled with inscriptions from the Kurán, and other pious texts not only in the decorations but scribbled over the walls by visitors. The whole building teems with these little memorials. They are all apparently after this manner: —

"There is no deity except God."

"God—there is no deity save Him alone—He is the Living, the Self-Existent."

"Our God—there is no deity but He—and our Lord Mohammed—there is no Prophet but he."

"God is the High, the Great—He made all things in six days and to Him is the return of all."

"Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds," &c. &c., *ad infinitum.*

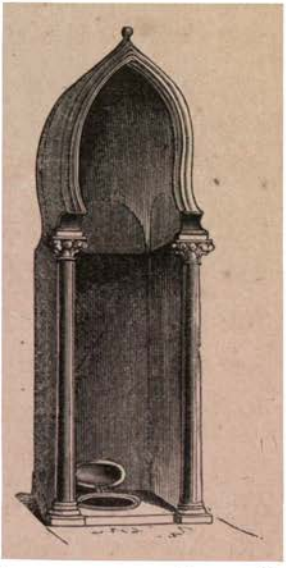
'To the right and left were doors closed with ancient massive gates of silver bars, thus . That on the right (west) contains the cenotaph of Abraham, that on the left, of Sarah. The doors were not opened, but we looked through the bars. On the thresholds were stands for lamps. The small chambers are very obscure; within are lofty cenotaphs, apparently covered with dark green silk, worked with gold, about 10 feet long by 7 high, a little raised to the south. From the ceiling hang canopies or sails of silk, which rest on the top. On the side of Abraham's cenotaph was a piece of black, with this inscription, or the like in gold letters:—

"This is the place of our Lord Abraham, the Friend of God;"

and on Sarah's—

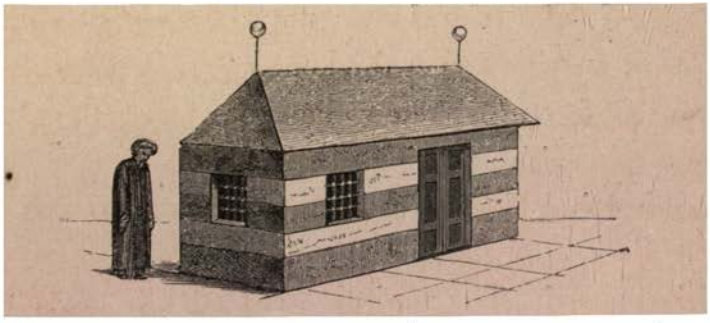
"This is the place of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, the Friend of God."

'Over the door of this vestibule, which looks into the court, is a beautiful window (sadly damaged) of small size, of Persian stained glass, such as is in the Suleymanieh Mosque at Constantinople and the Kubbet-es-Sakhrah at Jerusalem. We next entered the mosque. It is a very large and lofty building, consisting of a nave and two aisles, the nave much loftier than the aisles and far lighter; the floor is matted. The roof is groined, and it seemed to me like a building of the Crusaders. The columns are clustered, and the lower parts have been still farther thickened, about 8 feet up. The walls are panelled with precious inlaid marbles, in bold patterns, about 6 feet up, and all above this is whitewashed. The capitals were too high for me to see. The whole has a deserted, dusty, handsome, solemn look. Immediately to the right is a sort of tabernacle over a round brass boss, about 7 inches in diameter. This boss was unclasped and thrown back, and I was allowed to kneel down and peer into the cave itself. Down through this



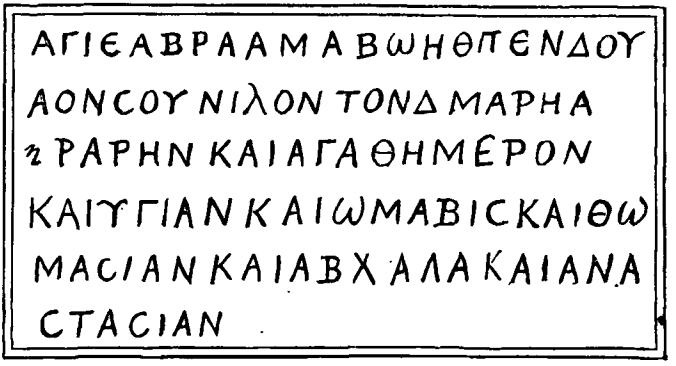
hole hung a coarse iron lamp, with a glass and two flaring wicks, which shed a bright light. This light fell on the rough rocky floor of the cave, littered over with small oblong billets of white paper, not more, I should think, than 12 feet below my face. This was the most interesting place in the Haram. The columns of the little tabernacle were of polished grey marble, with beautiful whitey-yellow capitals.

'Hence we went to the tomb of Isaac. This, and that of Rebecca, are ugly buildings, like small low cottages, standing opposite one another on each side of the nave, between the pillars, constructed in bands of red and white.



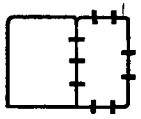
'They have windows, square and barred, in the north end and inner side, where is also a door. We peered through the end windows into the dusky dusty insides, filled up with great cenotaphs, like those of Abraham and Sarah, but not as handsome, and without canopies. Near the foot of Rebecca's shrine was an elegant and costly platform (Siddeh) against the pillars where the Cantors

stand during service. On both cenotaphs were words, stating whose "place" it was. We then passed up the east aisle, noticing half-way along it a beautiful circle of inlaid marble and silver mixed in the panelling. In the south-east corner is inserted a tablet with a Greek inscription, which was taken out of the cave. This had never been read, and so I carefully copied it. It being dark, they brought a large wax candle. Here it is, as I took it down:—



. . . As stupid as it well can be. From this inscription we passed along the south wall, passing the Mehrab, or niche which shows the "direction" (Kibleh) of Mekkeh, a rather handsome work of fine marbles. High above it is another beautiful Persian window. Just west of it is the pulpit (mimbar), a most elegant and curious work of wood carving, put together entirely without metal. It seemed old.

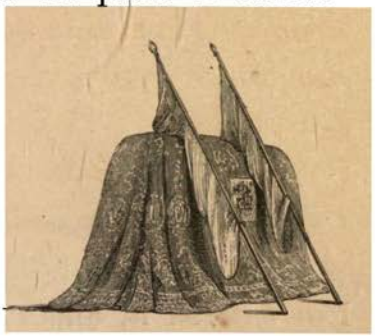
'Just west again of this is a second tabernacle, like the one over the hole into the cave, covering a



trap-door of stone, in two leaves, the lesser fastened down with iron clamps.

'This is the door of the cave, and I was informed (from tradition) that there was under it a stair which entered the cave about the place of the nearest pillar. There is a tradition that a certain Pacha once had the temerity to enter the cave. He saw Sarah *combing her hair*, but became almost immediately blind. From this point we passed down the west aisle, where was another piece of silver and marble work, and left the Mosque as we had entered it. We now crossed the court, and went into a small vestibule, clean, white, and matted, just opposite the Mosque door. There are doors on each side, where lie, on the west, Jacob, and on the east, Leah. Both apartments are octagons, new, clean, and whitewashed, with large windows to the south. On the thresholds were stands of silver for lamps. Both doorways were open, and I was invited to enter the shrine of Jacob. I walked round the cenotaph. The floor was richly carpeted with handsome prayer-carpets (heggádeh), and the tomb was lavishly covered with fine bright green silk palls, splendidly embroidered in gold, bearing holy mottoes, such as, "There is no deity but God;" "God is the most great;" "God lives;" "Praise be to God;" "In the name of God, the

Merciful, the Compassionate;" "Mohammed is the Prophet of God;" and the name of God, Mohammed, Abubekr, Omar, Ali, &c. On the side next the door an inscription, as in the rest, bore the statement that "this was the place of Jacob." I was asked not to enter the shrine of Leah, out of deference to her sex, but looked in freely. It was got up like Jacob's, but against the tomb rested two bright banners of green silk and gold, with gilt finials, which are carried in the sacred procession.



'A Muslim entered and pushed one aside from her black and gold inscription, which was thus:— "This is the place of Leah, the wife of Jacob. Let us pray our Lord that we may be with her in eternity."

'Beyond the door of Jacob's tomb is a closet, seemingly disused. We were taken round into an unfrequented corridor (16) to see Joseph's tomb, but saw nothing but a ruinous chapel. We then waited some time in the court for the key. At 17 is a drinking fountain, such as is common in mosques, and outside convents and churches. At 18 is a polished square black stone about 1 ft. square, set about 4 ft. up in the wall. They said it was nothing, but I think it must be the "Print of

Mohammed's Foot" spoken of by Fergusson. Below this stone, with his back to the Kibleh, knelt a man

reciting the Kurán from a large copy on a desk.

'This recitation never ceases, day or night, and is double, a second person being employed. There were about twenty persons all the time with us, who were quite civil. We left the Haram as we had entered it, and found an immense but silent crowd in the street. We were taken straight into some disused and shut-up buildings next to the Haram, and shown the tomb of Joseph, confessedly a sham. It appeared to be in an apartment below a ruined private house, and its misery was a marked contrast to the splendour of the others. The tomb was shabbily covered with dark green cloth, and the walls (whitewashed) marked with the names of God, Mohammed, Abubekr, Omar, Hassan, Huseyn, Ali, Fatmeh, and somebody else—perhaps JESUS. When we got into the street again we gave the Sheykh a baksheesh of twenty napoleons. He would not take it at first, but several urged him, and then he counted it before all, to avoid suspicion. I confess I think that the money considerably softened the faces of many. We made our adieux to the Sheykh, and went home undis-

turbed as we had come. The crowd was enormous and unfriendly, but silent. We entertained the mayor and head of police with pipes and coffee, when we got back. One took a baksheesh. The other refused, "for fear of the Pacha," he said. So ends this matter.'

Before returning to their tents our travellers stopped at the so-called House of Jesse, which is still in Jewish hands, though no Jew is permitted to see or to pray by the dust of the Patriarchs; and then went into the bazaar to purchase some of the blue glass bracelets and amulets for their horses, which are the staple manufacture of the place, together with the picturesque leathern water-skins (zemzymiahs) and some magnificent bunches of Eschol raisins. The Consul then proposed that they should ascend a rising ground not far from Abraham's oak, to see some curious ruins of a basilica of which the exterior walls are partly standing; but the road was so precipitous and so encumbered with big stones, that it was with the utmost difficulty the horses kept their footing.

After a fatiguing scramble the party regained their tents, and the following morning agreed to separate, the ladies for Jerusalem; the gentlemen for an expedition to Gaza and the land of the Philistines, of which the following is a graphic description from the pen of one of the elders of the party:—

'March 15, Tuesday.—Beit Jibrîn.

'After passing a cold night in our tents at Hebron (which is said to be the highest situated town in Palestine), we were up by sunrise, and breakfasted under Abraham's oak. Our party now divided, and while the ladies and the doctor returned by way of the Gardens of Solomon to Jerusalem, P—— and myself started on a five days' further tour through Southern Palestine and "the country of the Philistines." Besides Mr. K——, who is a most excellent interpreter, manager, and companion, we have with us our English man-servant, Iskander, who came with us from Cairo, and a retinue of *anativas* (or tent-pitchers), four muleteers, and two mounted horsemen. Our escort of Bedouins left us at Mar-Saba, where four of the Pacha's irregular cavalry joined us as guards. One of the two who have come on with us, is an Albanian, who knows Southern Syria well. It is amusing to see how he inspires respect into the Arabs by strong guttural Albanian oaths, not a word of which they understand. He is very proud of having served under Ibrahim Pacha. Though a wild rough fellow, he appreciates greatly little kindnesses, and seems most faithful. Last night as he was keeping watch, K—— heard him exclaim, "I swear that if even my father were to rise from the grave and touch one of the ropes of this tent, I

would shoot him through the head." Though a Moslem he drinks wine, but says aloud for the salving of his conscience, "It is only sugar and water; only lemonade good for the health." He does not at all like our consulting a map, and says angrily: "I have travelled through the country for thirty years, do not I know better than your inches?" Our second guard is equally devoted to our service, but the two whom we sent back to Jerusalem were sluggish discontented fellows. These irregulars, or Bashi-Bazouks, are volunteers who receive some small pay from Government, and are sent by the Pacha for the protection of travellers on the application of a consul. Of course, while on service they receive extra pay—about 4*s.* a day—from their Frank employers.

'After leaving Abraham's oak we traversed the Valley of Eschol, which is still well cultivated and full of flourishing vineyards, and which, I dare say, is not so very greatly changed since the day on which the twelve Israelitish spies bore off in triumph the cluster of grapes as the first trophy of the Land of Promise. As we emerged from the valley, all signs of cultivation disappeared, and we made our way by one of the wildest and most rugged tracks in Palestine to Jeffûh. On the summit of a neighbouring hill we could see the site of Adoraim, one of "the cities of defence," which Rehoboam built for Judah. From Jeffûh we continually descended by

a rocky zig-zag path till we reached a beautiful and fertile glen, called Wady-el-Feranj, probably from having been once a camping place for the Crusaders. In another hour or so we came to the little village of Idhna, where we rested ourselves and horses for an hour under the shade of a grove of olives close to an ancient-looking fountain. We asked the girls, who were drawing water, how old it was, and they answered "as old as your time," meaning the time of the Crusaders. An hour and a half more brought us through a succession of green little valleys to the Wady of Beit-Jibrîn. Here we stayed a few minutes to explore the ruined church dedicated to St. Anne by the Crusaders. Even the Moslem children here call the ruins "the church of the holy Hannè," the name having evidently been handed down by tradition, as but few Franks come by this way. The ruins are very extensive, but half-buried in the ground, though the apse is still perfect. We then came on to Beit-Jibrîn, and found our baggage-mules, which had gone a shorter way, already arrived, and our tents in process of being pitched.

'This place does not seem to have been a city of any importance till the time of the Emperor Severus, who gave it the name of Eleutheropolis (the free city), and bestowed on it many privileges. It played an important part in the wars of the Crusaders, who fortified it as a menace to the Saracenic

fortress of Ascalon. We visited the castle, which the Crusaders built here, and were much interested in finding in one corner of the ruins an old chapel with its columns and capitals still tolerably perfect. According to tradition this is the place where Samson slew the 1,000 Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, and I believe that the spring in the ruined castle is said to be that which rose miraculously from the jaw. However, the most famous of all the antiquities of Beit-Jibrîn, are the wonderful caves in the neighbourhood, which we visited this afternoon. They reminded me of the Roman catacombs, but are much loftier, and are lighted from above. They form several series of arched chambers, cut out of the soft limestone. In some places we could even now trace the marks of the chisel. Nothing is known for certain about the origin of these caves, but it is generally supposed that they were excavated during the Babylonish captivity by the Edomites, whom St. Jerome calls Horites, or "livers in caves;" and who—he tells us—lived near Eleutheropolis. However, I think that these caves must have been also inhabited in later times, as K—— to-day deciphered in one of them a Cufic inscription (which has probably not been read for hundreds of years) to this effect: "O God! Here was born Saida, who was born of Ali the prince. Made (*i. e.* carved) in the year 71." The year 71 is evidently dated from the Hegira, and this is

therefore one of the most ancient Moslem inscriptions in the world. Cufic has, I believe, been a dead language for 1,000 years. There are also some inscriptions in ancient Arabic, and we saw several crosses high up on the walls, probably carved by the Crusaders.

'In tent life we seem to come in for a fair amount of noise. Last night we were kept awake by the jackals, and to-night all the dogs (and they are no small number) of Beit-Jibrîn are barking in chorus.'

'March 16th, Wednesday.—Gaza (now called Ghuzzeh).

'To-day we have ridden some thirty-eight miles, our longest stage as yet in Syria; but as we started early, and the climate is cool in comparison with the plain of the Jordan, we came on at a good pace, and had the afternoon to spend here. To-day, too, we have had somewhat of an adventure, and thankful we ought to be that we are now safe and sound in our tents. We were up soon after 4 A.M., and *en route* before long. One of our horsemen, the Albanian, went as an escort with the baggage-mules, which we sent by a shorter route, while P—— and myself with K——, taking with us the younger Bashi-Bazouk, took the longer and less frequented route by the sites of Eglon and Lachish, which from their Bible associations are well worthy of a visit.

'Leaving the valley of Beit-Jibrîn, we came

through a somewhat rocky and undulating country, and in the course of a couple of hours, after passing through the village of Arak-el-Menshîzeh, emerged on the broad and fertile plain (really a continuation of the more northerly plain of Sharon) which stretches down to the sea. We then galloped a couple of miles till we came to the deserted village of Es-Sukharizeh, "the Sugary," probably so called from the sugar-cane having once been cultivated there. We had but just left the ruins of the village when we perceived, at the distance of perhaps 100 yards, a Bedouin sheikh brandishing his spear and awaiting our approach. He was armed to the teeth with a perfect array of pistols in his belt, and mounted on a beautiful thorough-bred mare. He was accompanied by a single attendant on foot, who, in contrast with the gay trappings of his master, presented but a sorry appearance. Though the sheikh seemed by no means well-disposed, and we knew that he might have a score of men within his call (Bedouins always seem to spring up out of the ground like Robin Hood's or Rob Roy's men), it would never have done to seem afraid, and so we rode straight up to him, and K—— accosted him in the terse Bedouin phrase, "Friends?" He half-doubtingly answered "Friends," and scanned us awhile from head to foot. We had purposely exposed our revolvers in our belts, and so he saw that he must needs fight if he would plunder us. He then

spoke a few words to our guard, who told him that we were persons of great consequence, and that, if any harm came to us, an English army would overrun the country and execute vengeance for any injury done to us.

'The Bedouin, who was a fierce-looking and yet a handsome fellow, apparently about forty years of age and looking as strong as a lion, rode a few yards by our side, seemingly in doubt as to what he should do; then he left us and turned aside from the track, then again followed us at some little distance. This kind of manœuvre was once more repeated, and while the sheikh was dogging our steps, we could only go at a foot's-pace lest he should imagine that we feared him and thereby be emboldened. Soon we saw an ominous encampment of black Bedouin tents a quarter of a mile or so to our left, in which direction the sheikh disappeared, as we thought, very likely to summon his men. Yet we dared not go fast as we were within view of the encampment, and the sight of us, as it were, galloping in flight, would certainly have kindled the love of plunder in any Bedouins. To add to our perplexity we now found that we had lost the track, but luckily soon came upon a party of some poor fellahs who are allowed by the Bedouins to cultivate part of the country subject to a kind of tribute and many lawless raids. They told me that the sheikh, whom we had met, was one of the

most desperate characters in the country, well known for his ferocity and cruelty. He had been known to attack as many as eight or ten unarmed travellers at once, and was the terror of the fellah-villages, many of which he had sacked, carrying off the women as slaves. The peasants, moreover, told us that the track, on which we then were, would lead us into the midst of another Bedouin encampment; had we gone on we should probably have been robbed of everything, even had we escaped with our lives. Arabs seldom attack travellers, unless they are certain of getting the mastery through numbers, and then their salutation is brief, "Strip—Spoil—You are in our hands!" If any of their own party are killed, they execute vengeance, otherwise they are generally content with plunder. However, for our comfort, the peasants told us that nearly all the horses belonging to the Bedouins were out at grass some miles off, so they could not pursue us in any numbers. We now got into the right track, and in five or ten minutes saw the second Bedouin encampment, towards which we had unwittingly been tending, a short distance to our right. We could not help feeling that we were in the midst of those "whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them." However, we still walked our horses till we reached the point of some high ground, and then being out of sight from both Bedouin encampments, we put

our horses into a gallop, and in half-an-hour were far away.

'The place where we first met the sheikh was almost within a stone's throw of a hillock covered with the *débris* of ruins, which still preserves in its name Ajlân the memory of the ancient Eglon. Riding some three miles across the plain we passed Um Lâkis, which is also a low hill covered with stones and is the representative of Lachish of the Philistines. The slaughter of Sennacherib's vast hosts before Lachish by the angel of the Lord has been the subject of one of Byron's best known odes; but on the spot itself, the events described in the Book of Kings seemed yet more vivid and present than could be called up to one's mind by any poetry. From Um Lâkis we continued our course through the plain, green with young corn and grass, so different from the hill-country we had so lately traversed, till we came to a large village, called Bureir, where we rested ourselves and our horses. The village has rather an Egyptian than a Syrian look, and the presence of some palm-trees completed the similitude. Leaving Bureir we had a couple of hours' ride to Gaza through meadows, corn-fields, and olive-groves which put to shame even the most luxuriant districts in Italy. I now see how the kingdom of Judah with the possession of this broad expanse of plain, so well adapted for every kind of cultivation, was able to cope with the more nu-

merous population of the ten tribes. The olive-groves in the neighbourhood of Gaza are very extensive, and are only, I believe, surpassed in Syria by those of Damascus and Beyrout. On arriving at Gaza, we sought shelter from the heat of the sun in a peasant's garden, where we obtained water and lettuces, while our Bashi-Bazouk went into the town to buy oranges and bread. Soft unleavened cakes, and some excellent coffee in the ordinary tiny cups, completed our repast. In the afternoon our mules arrived with the servants and baggage, and we went at once to our camping-ground, an open space near the governor's house, which we had selected for security. Afterwards we went to see the so-called tomb of Samson, and then rode up to a hill on the southern side of the town called Mukâm-el-Muntâr, which is said to have been the place to which Samson carried the Gates of Gaza. From this hill we had a splendid panorama of the surrounding country. Before us to the west, lay the straggling town, then a belt of sand-hills, and at a distance of two or three miles, the blue waters of the Mediterranean. On the other side we had the plain through which we had been journeying; but on the south, beyond the green pastures of Beersheba, stretched the arid waste of the Great Desert. How many associations did the scene before us call up, where the tent of the Hebrew patriarch, containing within its folds all that was

known of the true God on earth, had so often been pitched. On returning to the town, with the assistance and under the protection of a Moslem friend of K——'s (for the natives here are a most bigoted race and have a cordial hatred and contempt for "Christian dogs"), we visited the great mosque of Gaza. Though for the last 600 years used as a mosque, it was originally a Christian church, built, it is said, by the Empress Helena. The interior is very bare, but the nave and aisles, separated by Corinthian columns, of the original building, are still perfect, and have nothing in common with Saracenic architecture.

'Gaza is rather a collection of villages, like ancient Sparta, than a town properly so called. Though the outpost of Palestine on the side of the desert, it has no wall or fortification of any kind. The town's people, however, keep on excellent terms with the wandering Bedouins, and supply them with food, clothes, and arms, in exchange for the more costly, but less useful merchandise which is brought into Gaza captured from caravans in the desert. Some years ago English and other consular agencies were established here; but within the last few days, the people rose *en masse*, tore down the flags, and accomplished their object of driving out all signs of foreigners. I hear that at present there is but a single European resident at Gaza, an Italian, who combines the professions of barber and govern-

ment doctor of quarantine. The exchange at Gaza is much better than at any other town in the East, as you receive 125 piastres for a sovereign instead of 120. In fact, it would repay you if you wanted to exchange a large sum of money, to go all the way from Jerusalem to Gaza for this object. Of course, everything becomes proportionately dearer in the town itself.

'This evening the governor of Gaza came to pay us a visit and offer us his services. I hear that he is a man well known for his tyranny and strong-handed, yet unscrupulous government, on account of which he was at one period deposed by the pacha of Jerusalem. However, he went off immediately to the Bedouins, whom he had previously repressed, and raised a rebellion. The pacha accordingly was forced to reinstate him. To us, however, he made himself very agreeable, and was most chatty over his coffee. He at once recognised our description of the Bedouin sheikh whom we had met, and knew his name (the same as the peasants had told us) and all about him, even the colour of his mare. The governor said that he is well known as a desperate character with blood-stained hands, and that for the last two years the pacha has set a price upon his head, dead or alive. He likewise told us that we should have realised a large sum if we had shot him dead; and seemed greatly surprised that we had not at least tried to do so. He is not a

pure Bedouin by descent, having a taint of Nubian blood, but he is the leader of a small band of his own, desperadoes like himself. It was, perhaps, fortunate, that we had not our Albanian with us when we met this brigand-chief, as we hear that he has sworn to slay the first Albanian he meets in revenge for the death of his brother by one of that nation. Thank God, we are all here safe and sound.'

'March 17th, Thursday.—Eshdûd (Ashdod).

'We left Gaza at 7 A.M., and rode northward along the seaward edge of the plain, on the fertile fields of which however the sand from the shore is fast encroaching. At the village of Barbârah, we left the regular track and made a *détour* to visit the ruins of Ascalon on the sea-coast. We found shade in one of the gardens which occupy the site of the ancient city and spent a couple of hours resting and exploring the ruins. The position of Ascalon is magnificent, situated on a hill with a moderate elevation on the land side; but facing the Mediterranean, it has a natural fortification of precipitous cliffs, which run along the shore and are nearly 100 feet in height. In every direction on this raised plateau the ground is strewed with huge fragments of solid masonry. There are masses of stones and bricks still cemented together lying about as if upheaved and overturned by some tremendous earthquake. At one place we saw the old em-

battled walls still standing for 80 or 100 yards, and on the northern side of the city we discovered the remains of a temple or perhaps a church with its Grecian columns still standing. A great part of the site of the city is occupied by little gardens among the ruins, the gateways of the gardens being generally made out of ancient marble and granite columns. Such is the higher portion, the citadel as it were, of what was once a city of palaces, but the lower part is yet more terribly desolate, being year by year and day by day more surrounded and covered by the sand which drifts up from the desert. A belt of sand of some 500 yards' breadth even now divides Ascalon from the plain, and is daily encroaching on this devoted city. In some places we saw trees still green half-buried in sand. Were it not that a great part of the city stands on a hill, there would not long be traces of the once proud Ascalon. Truly and literally are fulfilled the prophecies, "Ashkelon shall be a desolation" and "Ashkelon shall not be inhabited." Half-a-mile from the remains of the northern wall is a miserable hamlet, with the significant name of El-Jurâh "the desolate," but within the ancient city there is not a single habitation. The depth of the sand made this part of our journey dreadfully distressing to the horses, while the heat made it almost impossible to walk.

'It was with a feeling of relief that we returned

to the plain, which in this part is as fertile as any land in England and requires much less care and farming. At Mejdel, quite a little town for this part of the world, we rested an hour or more in the yard of the public caravanserai and were regaled with excellent coffee and nargilêhs. Leaving Mejdel we rode some little distance through olive-groves and vineyards, on which, alas! the sand is already encroaching, and then entering the open plain had an hour's gallop to this place. We found our tents ready-pitched just outside the village, near a well of water worked by a thoroughly Egyptian wheel, which reminds one that in this southern part of Palestine are many Egyptian immigrants brought here by Ibrahim Pacha.

'This evening we have witnessed a thoroughly Oriental mode of justice, which, perhaps, is worth while recording. A Nubian had joined our servants' party for security, and was accompanying them from Gaza, when by chance they met a small band of unarmed Bedouins on foot. The Nubian at once recognised them as the identical persons who, a year ago, robbed him in this neighbourhood of his clothes and 500 piastres. He appealed to the guard, our fierce Albanian friend, who, without any more ado, drove off a donkey belonging to the Bedouins in lieu of restitution. They followed to Eshdûd and appealed to the sheikh of the villiage. Finally the Bedouins recovered

their donkey by going to a neighbouring tomb of some Moslem saint, and there thrice swearing that they had never robbed the black man.

'Though Ashdod was famous in the border wars of the Israelites and Philistines, and, in later times, held out for twenty-nine years against Psammitichus, King of Egypt, there seems to be hardly any traces of the ancient city, and the present village of Eshaûd is itself quite modern. Ashdod is by many, and probably rightly, identified with Azotus, where S. Philip the deacon was found after the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, but some authorities assert that Azotus is another name for Ascalon.'

'March 18th, Friday.—Tell-es-Safieh (Gath).

'We were away from Eshdûd soon after sunrise, and for a time held on our course northward, still having to our left a sandy barren ridge which intervenes between the plain and the sea. At Bushût, a poor hamlet, we left the sea-coast, and turning to the right rode on, in a north-easterly direction some twelve or fifteen miles, to 'Akis, the ancient Ekron. Here we halted some time, taking refuge from the noon-day heat, as usual, in a peasant's garden. We were soon the centre of a little circle of natives who entertained us with coffee, roasted, ground, and boiled on the spot, and were most friendly and communicative. The conversation, which we held with them through K—— as interpreter, is a type of

several which we have had during the last few days, and, perhaps, it is worth while recording some of their sentiments. The peasants told us they knew the ancient name of 'Akir was Ekron, having been told so by travellers, and said that they had themselves dug up massive antique vases. They believed that we were wandering about the country to examine the spots where hidden treasure is concealed, which Franks cannot touch now although they will soon, when they take possession of the land. Strange to say, it seems to be the universal belief among the peasants—nay, also even among many men of high position—that the Franks will soon occupy the territory now held by the Moslems. A verse in the Koran says, "By the sword the Mohammedan religion shall rise, and by the sword it shall fall." And at the present moment enthusiastic Moslems fully expect that the time is soon coming when the Franks shall rule, "but," they add, "in later times the power of Islam shall again shine forth in renewed and heightened splendour." The quantity of flies at this place was quite marvellous. They covered our faces and hands even more despairingly than in Egypt, tickling so dreadfully when we tried to rest that it was impossible to sleep. The heat was intense and quite knocked up one of the party, who nearly fainted in the saddle.

'When our hosts heard that we were English, they greeted us as allies, for, in common with most

Moslems, they believe that the English are servants of the Sultan bound to serve and protect him in time of need. "The Sultan is according to his title the King of kings," says the loyal Oriental, "and it is the highest privilege of the Queen of England, who is but his slave, to obey him." The more educated Turks, who know this to be false, say that England is an instrument in the hands of fate to defend their country. The 'Akir peasants had heard of the Suez Canal and told us that there were superhuman engines employed on it. They were much pleased with, but at the same time in considerable awe of, our revolvers, which they believed had been fabricated by genii so as to go off at the owner's will. Only one of the villagers, who was the priest of the place, could read and write; he had been educated at Cairo and seemed a rigid Moslem. One of the party frankly told us that his ancestors had been originally Christians, but his family had been forced by the sword to embrace the faith of Islam. He gave us the usual Moslem salutation, which it is forbidden to address to a Christian, "Peace be upon you," to which K—— answered in like phrase, "And upon you be peace." I do not know whether it is the case in southern Palestine, but it is said that in the neighbourhood of Damascus a considerable portion of the present Moslem population is descended from Christian ancestors, and I have heard that some among the

poorest of the fellah-peasants can still trace up their pedigree to some of the noblest Syro-Norman families, who remained in the East after the departure of the Crusaders. The theory, however, that the Druses are *en masse* descended from Franks seems to be altogether without foundation.

'From 'Akis, instead of continuing our northerly course which would have brought us in an hour or two to Ramleh, (where we slept on our way from Jaffa to Jerusalem), we doubled back as it were to the south-east, and striking across country through meadows and corn-fields, made for this place some twelve miles distant. Gath stands on a hill and so is a notable feature in the landscape for a great distance. We passed close to a Bedouin camp, which was pitched—probably to the despair of the fellahs—in the midst of cultivated fields. These Bedouins seemed to have immense herds and flocks of camels, horses, asses, cows and sheep. However, like most Bedouins, who possess much cattle, they were peaceably enough disposed to travellers, but they are the terror of the agricultural peasants. There are two harvests a-year in this rich plain, one in summer and a second in autumn; but often a little before harvest-time, the Bedouins come up from the desert, and turning out their cattle to feed amid the corn, lay hundreds of acres waste.

'The heat to-day was intense, and a peasant told us that rain is much needed, without which

the harvest will be but a poor one. Even now in March the crops are quite scorched and yellowed by the sun. We arrived here early in the afternoon and found our baggage-mules, which had come straight from Eshdûd, arrived and our tents already pitched in a field just below the village, which stands on a hill facing and overlooking the plain of Philistia. It must have been a very strong position, as it commands the pass from the plain to the hill-country, and not only was one of the principal royal cities of the Philistines, but was also of great importance in the time of the Crusades (when it was called Blanchegarde) being for a long while the head-quarters of Cœur de Lion. Of course there are some persons who deny the identity of Tell-es-Sâfich with Gath, but with no other site does the description given of Gath by Eusebius and St. Jerome agree.

'To-day we saw a mirage. It is certainly a most wonderful deception, and, had we not known that there was no lake near, we should have been certain that we saw a vast sheet of water. As we approached, it gradually disappeared. Though often seen in the desert, it is but seldom seen in a cultivated district. We have, however, beheld no less than three or four mirages within the last few days.

'This evening we have been out walking by moonlight and met some parties of peasants with whom, through K——, we had some conversation.

Their usual salutation was—"Welcome," to which our answer was—"Two welcomes." Some of them told us that they worked hard in the fields all day and tended cattle all night, and yet at the year's end they had scarcely anything to live on. The land hereabouts is crown land, and the peasants have to pay a rent equivalent to one-fifth of the produce to the government. Formerly the rent was levied in kind, but of late it has been in money. The Pacha, moreover, makes no allowance for bad harvests, and the exactions of the collectors, like those of the Jewish publicans, are most iniquitous. With this tremendous tax rigorously levied, and subject as they are to continual depredations at the hands of the Bedouins, the poor fellahs have a hard time of it. We told the peasants about labourers in England, and how our government cannot levy taxes *ad libitum* as in Palestine, and they said, "Would that the Franks would come and take this country!" The Arabs, one and all, seem to have a cordial hatred for the Turks, though at the same time they entertain a kind of loyal chivalrous feeling towards the person of the Sultan. We bade them good-night in Eastern phrase—"Depart in peace," and they answered—"May you go likewise."'

'March 19th, Saturday.—Jerusalem.

'The last day of our tour in southern Palestine, we were up even earlier than usual and in our

saddles before sunrise. We had now returned to the hill country and had to thread our way through narrow glens, in most places well-cultivated and green with young corn, bounded by hills covered with shrubberies. After a while we came to a collection of beautiful olive-groves, which surround the little village of Ajjur, and soon afterwards we emerged on the Wady-es-Surat, famous in Bible history by its ancient name of "the Valley of Elah," as the battle-ground between David and Goliath. It stretches some four or five miles in length, but, I should think, not more than a mile in breadth. A more lovely vale I have never seen, and we saw it to its best advantage by the morning sun. We passed to our left Jell-Zakarîza, probably the site of Azekah; and, at some little distance from it, we came to a place called Shuweikeh, the Socoh of the ancients. Between these two towns the host of the Philistines lay encamped, when for forty days the giant descended into the plain to defy the armies of Israel. On the other side of the valley, close under the hills, was the camp of the Israelites, and between the two encampments was the brook out of which David selected the five pebbles for his sling. At the further end of the valley we rode through this same torrent-bed, at this time of the year, dry and still covered with thousands of smooth stones. After the death of Goliath, the routed armies of the Philistines fled to Gath and Ekron by the

very route which we had taken. We could easily picture to ourselves on the spot, with the great features of the landscape apparently unchanged, the heart-stirring incidents of the encounter of the two champions; but the associations of battle and bloodshed, but ill-harmonised with the peaceful scene before us. However, I hear that within the last twenty years this same valley of Elah has been the fiercely contested battle-ground between two Bedouin tribes.

'We now entered again the hill-country of Judæa, wild and beautiful in its way, but almost utterly destitute of any cultivation. The hills are covered, it is true, with many-coloured flowers, such as are garden-plants in England, but here growing in wild luxuriance; and also with aromatic shrubs; but the terraces which once supported belts of corn, olives, vines, and figs, have long since been washed away by the rains through the peasants neglecting to strengthen them or keep them in repair. Now and then we came to some favoured spots under proper cultivation, and there nature fully repays the care of the industrious husbandman. It is said that the disappearance of the woods, which once clothed the hills of Judæa, has exposed the country during the summer months to a far greater length of drought than formerly, and this, coupled with the neglect of all proper agriculture, fully accounts for the desolate appearance of what was of old described as "a land flowing with milk and honey." We halted

for four or five hours during the noon-day heat under some citron-trees, tired out as we were from our early risings and long rides of the last ten days. We started again at three o'clock and had a three hours' ride to Jerusalem, passing *en route* St. Philip's Fountain, which we had previously visited from Bethlehem, the Wady-el-Werd (the Valley of Roses) and the Greek convent of the Cross, to both of which places our rides from Jerusalem had extended a fortnight ago. We arrived at Jerusalem before sunset, at which hour the city gates are closed, and soon were comfortably located in the Mediterranean Hotel, where we found the rest of our party.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE WAY TO NAZARETH.

With a heavy heart one fine morning in April our travellers mounted at the convent door, and rode for the last time out of the Damascus gate. The day was bright and beautiful; spring flowers carpeted the ground, and for about two hours the path was tolerably smooth and easy; but after passing Jeba the road became rocky and precipitous to the last degree; more a goat track, in fact, than anything else. Their horses also were strange and somewhat unmanageable, and one little mare having taken to fighting a grey horse belonging to a lady who had joined their party, the beasts bit and kicked with such goodwill that no efforts of their riders could separate them; and one more vigorous kick than the rest, having cut the girths which held one of the saddles, the lady found herself suddenly under her steed instead of above him, in the midst of a very disagreeable struggle of horses' heels (of which she received her full share), and was with difficulty rescued, much bruised and mauled, but not seriously hurt. A scrambling ride

NAZARETH.

up a steep gorge brought them to Michmash, now a wretched village, but mentioned by Eusebius as an important town in his day. The ruins still remain of a very fine church once dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, but now utterly desolate. From Michmash, the party rode on to Bethel, passing on their way by the ruins of Ai. It was here that Abraham encamped with his nephew Lot, and that they agreed to separate, Lot choosing the plain of the Jordan for his resting-place. On all sides there are ruins of churches and towers; but Bethel is rich in Old Testament recollections, and a standing monument likewise to the fulfilment of the prophecy against her that she should 'come to nought.' In the valley below is a cistern 300 feet long, out of which spring two fountains of clear pure water, in the midst of a green sward sprinkled with cyclamen and yellow irises. An hour's ride brought them to a beautiful camping-ground called 'Ain Haramiyeh,' or the Robber's Fountain, where they found their tents pitched close to a gushing stream, while a wooded glen to the right, full of fig and olive trees, gave a welcome shade to those who were disposed to stroll in that direction; but two of the party were thankful to crawl to their tent beds: the one suffering from fever caught at Jerusalem; the other so stiff with the bruises she had received in the morning that it was with the utmost difficulty she had continued in the saddle.

The effort of rising the next day at half-past three in the morning was nearly as great, and at first seemed simply impossible; but if anything could compensate for the physical pain, it was the extreme beauty of the ride from Ain Haramiyeh to Shechem, now called Nablûs, which was to be their next halting-place. Winding through the rocky wooded gorge which they had glanced at the the previous evening, and sorely tempted every moment to stop and gather the lovely tufts of wild flowers which grew in every fissure of the rocks, they emerged into a wide and beautiful plain, richly cultivated and bounded by mountains. In the opening between the two ranges of Gerizim and Ebal is the modern town, with its white houses and minarets, its orange and olive groves; the whole forming the most exquisite and finished picture. Dean Stanley's description, which our travellers had been reading in the morning, is accurate as a daguerreotype; and his happy selection from Van de Velde's 'Travels,' touches on the one point which at once struck on the artistic sense of the party; that it was the only place in Palestine where there were 'atmospheric tints' in the landscape. The absence of this is painfully seen in the chromolithographs of M. Carl Werner's drawings, which are true to nature, but hard to the eye, from the fiery tints and black shadows of the hill-sides. Now, in the Vale of Shechem, the vegetation near

the town retains the moisture which is wanting elsewhere, and produces that wonderfully 'lovely, bluish haze,' so dear to the heart of the painter. But the heat was intense, and on reaching a rising ground where there were some fine old olive-trees, some of the party determined to rest till evening, without encountering the broiling descent of the hill till the sun's rays had become less vivid. The others, however, to whom heat was an unmixed enjoyment, rode on to Jacob's Well, which is at the mouth of the valley; a spot undisputed even by the writers of the present day, whose whole object seems, in general, to be to overturn every hallowed tradition and weaken the faith of all succeeding ages by materialising and profaning every spot on which they tread. Here the travellers dismounted, and visited, first, a little white Moslem mosque, built over the tomb of Joseph; and then, descending a rough bit of ground to the left, they came on the mouth of the well, with its broken edge of stone, but still undeniably *the* well, which, whether in the Old or New Testament, is associated with all that is most touching and beautiful in Holy Scripture narrative. Leaving the spot with great reluctance, our party galloped along the smooth cultivated sward till they reached the city gates, and then rode slowly and carefully through the narrow ill-paved streets, and in the midst of a fanatical population, who spit at them as they passed, to a

wooded grove at the other end of the town, near a rushing stream, where they had desired their tents to be pitched. But the suffocating heat of this spot made it impossible to remain there; and after some deliberation, they fixed on a camping-ground higher up, on a raised plateau not far from the ascent of Gerizim, contenting themselves with the shade of some trees in the stifling little valley till the 'atwals,' or tent-pitchers, had done their duty above.

In the afternoon, they went with the Samaritan rabbi, Jacob Erd Shallif, to the synagogue, where they were shown the oldest known copy of the Pentateuch, a roll in a most curious cylindrical silver case, richly embossed and engraved, and admirably given in the photograph of Mr. Bedford. It was said to have been written by the son of Eliezer, the grandson of Aaron and the nephew of Moses! Another copy, less ancient, but still of very respectable date, was likewise brought for their inspection, and some pages torn out and given them before they had time to remonstrate at the sacrilege. They also saw a stone in the court-yard on which was carefully engraved the first three verses of the first chapter of Genesis, and the words three times repeated: 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.' This stone was found on Mount Gerizim. Jacob next took them into his own house, and introduced them to his wife

and children, the former of whom is very beautiful. Two or three of his co-religionists were likewise present, in the red turbans which are the distinctive mark of their sect. But they gave a dismal account of the decay in their numbers, which would lead one to suppose that another century would see the extinction of this most curious and unique remnant of an ancient and bygone faith. The following day, very early in the morning, the party started for the ascent of Mount Gerizim, through a winding path bordered by prickly pear, orange, and other fruit-trees, while beautiful monthly roses, in full bloom, grew luxuriantly in what we should call the hedge-rows. Soon the road became more barren and steep, with caves on either side; and finally, vegetation ceased altogether, and they had to dismount and scramble up the remainder of the way, holding on by the projections in the rock. Mount Gerizim has been so admirably and minutely described by Dean Stanley and Mr. Tristram, that any further words by any future traveller could be but a repetition of theirs. The place of the Paschal sacrifice, still offered in this one spot on earth; the ruins of Christianity grafted on the same site; the rock of sacrifice corresponding in size and shape with that in the Mosque of Omar; and, above all, the glorious view, which embraces the whole of Central Palestine—a view unrivalled in the Holy Land; all this our travellers thoroughly entered into and enjoyed.

Close by the ruins of the ancient basilica is a tower, built by Justinian to protect the church. An old shepherd was living in it, and pointed out all the traditional sites of interest around. Descending the hill, some of the party rode with the English Vice-Consul into the town, which from this side looked more picturesque than ever, the white minarets and graceful palms and dome-covered houses standing out against the bright green vegetation around. The bazaars are excellent, with large manufactories of soap, cotton, pottery, and, above all, saddlery, which they embroider in beautiful and fantastic patterns, and in the brightest colours. But the pleasure of shopping was marred by the surliness of the inhabitants. In the centre of the town is a Christian basilica, with beautiful marble pillars and carved capitals, now converted into a mosque. By the help of the Pacha's firman and a liberal 'bakshesh,' two of the party were allowed to enter: a very unusual privilege, and one resented by the population, who gathered in menacing attitude on the outside, but were restrained from open violence by the Moslem keeper of the mosque who had admitted the strangers within the forbidden precincts. The church is in perfect preservation and full of Christian emblems; though the altars have been removed, and replaced by the usual solitary Mahometan pulpit. But the day was waning, the Duke of M—— was about to occupy their Nablous

camping-ground, and so the tents were struck, and our travellers cantered along the same beautiful green valley and over a picturesque bridge for six miles till they reached Sebaste,* the ancient Samaria, situated on a hill with a flat top overlooking the glorious plain, with a long line of broken pillars (the remains of Herod's palace), on the one side, and the deeply interesting ruins of the Knights Templars' Church of St. John the Baptist on the other. They camped on this piece of beautiful smooth sward on the high table-land, and then strolled down to examine the church, built in 396 by Theodosius over the tomb of St. John the Baptist, upon the site of an old temple of Serapis, and which has now been converted into a (disused) mosque. The broken crosses and emblems of those faithful defenders of the Holy Land are still seen embedded in the walls. A flight of steps conducts the pilgrim to the prison where St. John the Baptist is said to have been confined, and finally beheaded.†

And now the road leads them, through fertile pasture-land and past inland basins of rain-water covered with wild-fowl, to Jenin, with its beautiful

* Sebaste in Greek signifies Augustus, and was so called by Herod to flatter the Emperor.

† Josephus says St. John the Baptist was confined in the castle of Macherus, two leagues beyond the Lake Asphaltites, upon the borders of Arabia Petræa. But there seems no doubt as to his having been buried at Sebaste.

date-palms and olive-trees and orange-groves. But the inhabitants were surly and fanatical. From a cave in the rocks two of them had pointed their long guns at the cavalcade as they neared the village; but on being pursued by one of the horsemen, armed with a revolver, they rapidly retreated. The travellers rested during the heat of the noonday sun in a parklike ground, with fine trees, by the side of a rushing stream; but their occupation of it was disputed by the inhabitants, and finding that the only eligible spot for pitching the tents had been secured by the servants of the Duke of M——, they resolved to push on a few miles farther, and camp at Jezreel. A straight route, four miles in length, leads direct to the city—now in ruins—and to the remains of Ahab's watch-tower; that very route by which 'Jehu the son of Nimshi' was seen 'driving furiously.' They found that their dragoman had pitched their tents on the rocky site of what is supposed by tradition to be Naboth's vineyard. But here uncomfortable tidings awaited them. The escort promised by the Sheik of Jenin had failed to make its appearance, being engaged in checking a raid and revolt on the other side of the valley; and a hostile tribe of Bedouins, with their long low black camel-hair tents, were camped in a wooded bottom, scarcely half a mile from the halting-place of the travellers. A council of war was held with the Sheik of Jezreel, who

agreed to allow twenty or thirty of the principal inhabitants (*moyennant* a handsome 'bakshesh') to act as guards during the night. Every precaution was taken; the tents pitched in a circle, the horses and mules picketed in the centre, and watch-fires were lit all round the encampment. The younger portion of the party, heedless of danger and wearied with the heat and the long day's ride, very soon forgot their alarms in sleep. But their elders watched all night; and well it was that they did so, for at one o'clock in the morning the alarm was given that the Bedouins were upon them. It was only a reconnoitring party, however; and finding the Europeans on the alert, and the native guard valiantly patrolling and shouting out their national war-cries, they wheeled round and rapidly galloped back to their tents. Fearful, however, that they might return in increased numbers, the travellers resolved to leave their insecure camping-ground as early as possible; so that four o'clock of the following morning found them in the saddle on their way to Nazareth. Winding down a steep hill, they came upon the great plain of Esdraelon, which is more than twenty miles in extent, and capable of the finest cultivation; but, under the sway of a powerful Bedouin sheik, it is reserved for the pasture-ground of his tribe; and the few peasants, who, armed to the teeth, were ploughing little patches here and there, or tending

small flocks of sheep, pay a heavy black-mail to the marauder for even this scant courtesy. Shunem, a miserable village, surrounded with a hedge of prickly-pear, was quickly passed; but our travellers lingered at Nain, where a rude cross marks the spot on which, in ancient times, a church was erected by 'the gate of the city,' where that wonderful miracle of love and tenderness was performed by our divine Lord. A fountain remains, where the Arab girls were filling their pitchers and poising them on their heads with their usual native grace. A burial-ground, still used by the Moslems, is shown to the right of the village; and on this very path must our Lord have met the sorrowful procession as it passed out of the gate. From Nain the travellers came to Endor, with its caves in the rocks, which seem as if they must be unchanged since the time of the witch's residence. Here a glorious view burst upon them,—Tabor, with its low round green top, and its base skirted with dwarf oak, ilexes, and arbutus. High above it, glistening in the sun, rose the conical peak of Hermon, 'white as snow,' with the Kishon dividing the valley beneath, and Carmel forming the barrier to the left; while to the right lay the long low range of Bashan, 'beyond Jordan.' It is a magnificent panorama, and brings before one the imagery of the Prophets and of the Psalms more strikingly than almost any other part of Palestine.

Quantities of storks were feeding on the green patches in the plain, while here and there eagles and hawks soared above their heads. But one of the ladies of the party was ill; she had been suffering from fever ever since leaving Jerusalem; so, in order to expedite her journey, the guides suggested that the travellers should take a short cut to Nazareth, up a steep and somewhat rugged path, by the Mountain of Precipitation, while the baggage-mules went round the longer way by the plain. In an evil hour this proposal was acceded to, and the ascent begun. But very soon the road became impassable for the horses; in their efforts to scramble up the precipitous rocks the saddle-girths broke, and the travellers were compelled to dismount, greatly to the increased suffering of their invalid, who fainted repeatedly on the road, and caused them the gravest anxiety. It was with immense thankfulness, therefore, that, on reaching the summit, after two hours of painful exertion, they perceived the white houses of modern Nazareth nestled in a gorge between two hills;* and with still greater joy found themselves at the door of the Franciscan convent, where the usual hearty welcome awaited

* An old historian, Geoffroy de Beaulieu, gives the following account of the entry of St. Louis into Nazareth, which took place, like that of our travellers, on the Vigil of the Annunciation.

'The king, wearing a hair shirt, bent his steps towards Nazareth on the eve of the great feast. When he perceived the city from a distance, he got off his horse, and having knelt for a few moments in prayer, he proceeded on foot to the Holy City, the "Nutriculam

them, and the Duke of M—— gave up his own rooms to afford more comfortable accommodation to the suffering lady. The illness became serious, and detained the party three weeks; and during the whole of that time the thoughtful care of the monks, and especially of the kind old Spanish doctor and the venerable Padre Guardiano, exceeded belief. The latter literally spent his days in devising little luxuries and alleviations for the invalid. The earliest asparagus, the first strawberries, the brightest flowers,—even some scented soap and toilet-vinegar, which had been presented to him in bygone days by some enthusiastic lady-pilgrim, were ransacked from his stores for the benefit of the sufferer. When she was well enough to be moved homewards, he arranged a litter for her to enable her to reach the sea-coast without fatigue. And this lady was neither of his own country nor of his own creed! Yet pilgrims have been found to say harsh and bitter things against this kind old man and his Franciscan brethren, to complain of and find fault with their hospitality, to grumble at the food, and to throw discredit generally on their Order, thereby causing them grievous pain and disquiet.

But to return to our travellers. It was the 4th of

Domini," as St. Jerome calls it. He fasted that day on bread and water, though he had had a most fatiguing march.

'Since the day which witnessed the Incarnation of the Son of God, never had Nazareth seen so earnest and hearty a devotion.'

April—the 25th of March had fallen that year on Good Friday, so that the great festival of the Incarnation had been remitted to that day. From the earliest dawn, the beautiful Church of the Annunciation, with its high altar, raised on a double flight of steps, and its beautiful shrine below, leading to the house of the Blessed Virgin, had been thronged with kneeling figures. The women were unveiled—for Nazareth, like Bethlehem, is essentially a Christian town. They were all dressed in gay colours and holiday costume, with strings of gold coins round their necks or wound in their dark hair. They covered every inch of the steps leading to the sacred subterranean shrine, where a star marks the spot—'Hic Verbum caro factum est;'—a broken column suspended from the roof indicates the supposed place where the Blessed Virgin was kneeling when Gabriel—God's chosen messenger—appeared before her.

Here were spoken those words in which she accepted her sacred mission, and with it her share in the sufferings of the redemption: 'Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.' Words as fruitful as the first 'Fiat' pronounced by the Creator, when, in His omnipotence, He made the world; for, by her humble acquiescence in the Divine will, she consented to the conception, by the Holy Spirit, in her immaculate womb, of the Creator Himself made man.

Here lived St. Joachim and St. Anne; here St. Joseph; here, in a word, was the home of the Holy Family. Here our Lord, after His return from Egypt, lived thirty years of that sacred hidden life; here 'erat subditus illis,' living in the profoundest submission to his Virgin mother and his supposed father. And this place, where the great mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished, what was it but a poor humble home, in a quiet village of a land reduced to the condition of a petty province of the great Roman Empire; nay, more, even in this land Nazareth had become a byword of contempt and reproach!

High mass was over, when the Padre Guardiano came to propose to our travellers to visit the other spots which make Nazareth a place of such deep and thrilling interest to every reader of Gospel history. Their first visit was to the synagogue, where our divine Lord, having read in the Book of the Prophet Isaias the words regarding Himself, sat down and expounded them to the people, who 'wondered at the gracious words which proceeded from His mouth.' This synagogue is now converted into a Greek church, supposed to have been built by Tancred, who was Prince of Galilee during the temporary Christian occupation of the Holy Land. From the synagogue they passed on to St. Joseph's workshop, now a little chapel, rudely furnished, but where mass is daily said by one of

the Franciscan fathers. From thence they walked to the table or rock popularly called 'Mensa Christi,' where our Lord is said to have dined with His disciples both before and after the Resurrection. It is on the summit of the city, and a tiny chapel has been erected close to the stone. The Padre Guardiano then led the way to the Fountain of the Madonna, which is situated at the eastern entrance of the town, and is the only spring of fresh good water existing in Nazareth. Here, by undisputed tradition, the Blessed Virgin daily came during those thirty years. Here, again, must her divine Son have constantly accompanied her. Groups of women now, as then, were filling their pitchers at the fountain; looking like the ancient Bible pictures of our childhood, and dressed precisely as the Blessed Virgin is perpetually represented by the early masters—in red dresses and blue drapery, a white square cloth covering the head. In every walk, at every turn, in the streets, or on the hills, or in those flowery valleys, one seems to realise the presence of both the Mother and the Son. It was revealed to St. Bridget that the rough men of sequestered Nazareth, when they were sad, used to say, 'Let us go and see Mary's Son!' So wonderful was the reflection of His beauty and holiness; so exquisite His sympathy; so keen, in Him, was every natural human feeling; so wonderful His thought for all! In the beautiful words of a modern traveller,

'Nazareth was the nursery of One whose mission was to meet man and man's deepest needs on the platform of commonplace daily life;' and every step of that 'daily life' becomes ennobled in the thought of Him who trod the same path.

Coming home, our travellers visited the convent of 'Les Dames de Nazareth,' who have a large orphanage, admirably managed, not far from the Franciscan convent; and among the children are many sufferers from the terrible Lebanon massacres. The Superior pointed out one little girl, with dark and earnest eyes, whose mind had never recovered from the shock and horror of that scene. Her father had been murdered while endeavouring to save her; and his brains had been dashed all over her face, which the poor child was continually rubbing, as if to wipe away the horrible remembrance. These nuns were most kind in their offers of service to the sick lady at the hospice, and afterwards volunteered to receive her in their little home at Caiffa, previous to her embarkation. A beautiful Benediction, sung by the sisters and orphans, closed a walk so full of absorbing interest.

The following morning our pilgrims were early in the saddle, and again, under the guidance of the kind Padre Guardiano, were ascending the steep and beautiful path leading to Mount Tabor, which is a ride of about two hours from Nazareth. The hill-sides were perfectly pink with the delicate

linum, the cistus, and other spring-flowers. The shape of Tabor is that of a truncated cone, the base being thickly fringed with dwarf oak, ilex, and arbutus. The ascent is difficult and painfully rugged; but the view from the summit repays all the toil. On one side is stretched the great plain of Esdraelon, with the little village of Deborah the Prophetess, which still bears her name, nestled under the great hill; on the other, the village of Cana and the plain of Zabulon, the Mount of the Beatitudes and the beautiful lake of Tiberias glistening in the sun; while beyond are the mountains of Hermon and Lebanon, and the cities of Safed, Bethulia, Naphthali, and Cæsarea Philippi. The ruins of no less than three fine churches remain on the top of the mountain, one of which has lately been restored by the Greeks. But the Padre Guardiano led our party to the one to which tradition points as the actual scene of the Transfiguration, and there celebrated the holy sacrifice.

The mass over, the party breakfasted under the shadow of the ruins, on a smooth green sward, which formed the flat summit of the mount, and then reluctantly proceeded to leave the sacred spot and descend the hill. Here the Padre Guardiano left them, to return to Nazareth; while the pilgrims continued their road towards Tiberias, resolving to pay a visit on their way to Achill Aga, 'the Sheik of sheiks,' as he is called, whose black tents

were stretched out on the plain at the base of the mountain. This mighty Bedouin chief virtually owns the whole of the surrounding country; and the Porte has found it both politic and necessary to make a treaty with him, so as to insure the safety of the travellers and of the dwellers in the plains. He is a remarkable man, with a frank and pleasing exterior, and has the reputation of being both generous and brave. A kind of native *durbar* was being held when our travellers approached; but Achill Aga rose with stately courtesy, and conducted the ladies to a divan raised at one end of his tent. On a signal from him, cushions, coffee, and other refreshments were noiselessly brought. In the mean time various other sheiks made their appearance, all of whom prostrated themselves on their arrival, before Achill Aga, and submissively kissed his hand. One of these chiefs, a man of a singularly cruel and forbidding aspect, was the sheik of the tribes in the plain of Esdraelon, and had 600 mounted horsemen day and night ready to fulfil his behests. He was at the head of a far more powerful people than Achill Aga; but the moral influence of the latter compelled an outward show of submission.

Coffee and pipes having been discussed, Achill Aga offered to show the ladies his harem; and a black eunuch was summoned to escort them to a neighbouring tent, where a singularly handsome

woman, beautifully dressed, and with large pearls round her neck, was waiting to receive her guests. Having no interpreter, however, signs were obliged to take the place of words with the ladies; but it needed no explanation when a black attendant produced a beautiful child, of two or three years old, just woke out of its sleep, at the sight of whom the mother's love shone out unmistakably from the bright eyes of the Bedouin lady. Achill Aga afterwards produced, with natural pride and pleasure, the watch and pistols given him by the Prince of Wales; and then proceeded to show off the mares and foals which were pastured round the camp, some of which were of priceless value. In the mean time a kind of guard of honour had been prepared for our travellers, who amused them by a variety of feats of horsemanship, throwing their long lances, and executing a species of war-dance, as they wheeled and doubled round and round the party, and occasionally rode races with the younger and best-mounted of them. The sun was still high in the heavens when the pilgrims found themselves at the base of the Mount of the Beatitudes, after crossing the plain of Zabulon—that plain so fatal as being the theatre of that last disastrous battle which decided the fate of the Christians, and ended the reign of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. The field below the hill is the one in which our Saviour is supposed to have walked and gathered the ears of

corn on the Sabbath-day, to the scandal of the proud Pharisees. Ascending the Mount of the Beatitudes, a Carmelite priest, who was of the company, recited the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, sitting on the stones which mark the ruin of an ancient church built by the Crusaders on this sacred spot. The whole of the Sea of Galilee appeared stretched at their feet, forming, with the violet colour of its surrounding mountains, the most beautiful panorama possible. The hill on the opposite side of the plain was pointed out by the guides as the scene of the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes; but the pilgrims, being anxious to reach Tiberias before nightfall, gave up the idea of ascending this also, and followed the winding track, which led down a steep and precipitous hill to the sea-shore.

Tiberias is a fortified town; but the walls and forts have been nearly destroyed by a succession of earthquakes, which have, however, spared the church. Rebuilt by Herod Antipas in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, it was once a royal city of great importance, but is now reduced to a few miserable houses, inhabited by a race of fanatical Jews. Our party camped on the sandy shores of the lake beyond the town, not far from the thermal springs and baths supposed to have been built by the Emperor Vespasian. The next morning early, one of the party, following a native guide through a cleft in the wall of the city, made her way rapidly through

the deserted streets to the little church built in honour of St. Peter, on the very spot where our Divine Lord is said to have given him the keys which were henceforth to bind or loose the whole Christian world. This site has been held in veneration ever since the second century; but the actual church was built by Tancred at the time of the first Crusades. It is in the form of a ship ready for launching, and the waves of the Sea of Galilee beat upon its prow, but have never yet prevailed: fit emblem of the Bark of Peter, which all the powers of hell and of the world have conspired to attack, but failed to overthrow. There is a little hospice attached to the church, occupied by a Franciscan priest and a lay-brother, with a beautiful view from the terrace on the flat roof of the house. But their position is a painful one, surrounded by a singularly fanatical population, mainly consisting of Jews, who, in their long dressing-gowns, and with their corkscrew ringlets, scowled at the pilgrims as they passed down the streets. Two beautiful fair boys, with the faces of cherubs, served the mass; but the congregation was scanty and poor, and fever had decimated the Christian residents. After mass the party again mounted to ride along the shores of the lake, which were fringed with oleanders, pink and white, in the fullest blossom, and with beautiful double and single hollyhocks of different shades. A party of Achill Aga's men, armed to the teeth,

accompanied our travellers, singing war-songs, and occasionally galloping furiously forward, as if to attack them, when, suddenly reining in their horses, which were brought down almost on their haunches, they would remain immovable, with their long lances crossed in a point on the ground, in token of respect and courtesy. An escort was very necessary along these shores; for hostile tribes were about, whose raid on the cattle of the unoffending fishermen Achill Aga's men were about to avenge, and their scouts were seen lurking here and there among the ruins. Passing by Magdala, a small village with nothing remarkable about it, save the ruins of an ancient watch-tower, our party came, after an hour's ride, to Bethsaida. A ruined mill alone marks the spot so full of interest as the birth-place of St. Peter, St. Andrew, and St. Philip, and as the spot where St. James and St. John were called by the Saviour, while 'mending their nets,' to their high place in the Apostolic College.

Another half-hour brought them to Capernaum, that city so full of reminiscences of the daily life of our Divine Lord during His three years' ministry; the scene of so many miracles, and yet that city the eyes of whose people were 'blinded that they saw not,' and on which, as on Bethsaida and Chorazin, the woe was emphatically pronounced by the Saviour—that woe so literally fulfilled; for not one stone remains upon the other, and it has been 'more

tolerable for Tyre and Sidon' than for them. A little farther on, they came to the place where the Jordan empties itself into the lake. Close by is a heap of stones, which mark the site of Chorazin, of which all that can be said was said by the guide to our travellers: '*Una volta era quì*!' Above their heads, perched on the side of the mountain, was Safed, the city 'set on a hill,' which 'could not be hid.' Every foot of this ground is sacred to the eye of faith, every mountain and stone teems with its sacred imagery. Returning to Tiberias, our travellers felt that their pilgrimage would be incomplete without going on the lake, and so hired a clumsy boat, one of the only two existing, which looked primitive enough to have been there since our Saviour's time, and for which the Jewish proprietor demanded an exorbitant price. The day was lovely, the heat intense. Nothing could equal the stillness of the scene or the desolation of the shores; but the lake is proverbially treacherous. Only two days before, a storm had suddenly overtaken a similar party, who, in this unmanageable tub, were saved with difficulty. A few fishes were caught by the boatmen as they lazily rowed towards the south of the lake, past the ruins of the town of Tarichea and the land of the Gadarenes to the mouth of the Jordan on the opposite side; and then back again to the town of Tiberias, where the tents were already folded on the baggage-mules, in

readiness for the return towards Nazareth. The temptation to linger by the lake had overcome the usual prudence of our travellers, and mid-day found them only half-way to Nazareth, exposed to a burning sun, and with a scanty supply of water to quench their thirst. One of the younger ones, with less endurance than the rest, at last threw himself off his horse, declaring his inability to go on any farther. But he was compelled to remount, and the whole party galloped as quickly as the road would allow till they reached Cana, and with it the only spring of good water to be found between Tiberias and Nazareth. A beautiful broken sarcophagus lies by the fountain, where some cows were drinking, whom the weary cavalcade quickly displaced. Their thirst at last quenched, they proceeded to visit the house, or rather court, which was the scene of the first miracle—a building recently purchased by the Marquise de ——. A church was formerly erected on this spot, of which a few broken arches only remain; but some large water-jars were lying in the court, exactly of the shape and size represented by the painters, which completed the picture or 'composition of place,' in the minds of the pilgrims. From Cana, a beautiful ride through a wood of dwarf oak, arbutus, and myrtle, leads to Saffurieh, the ancient Seforis, where are the remains of a fine old Roman castle, and a large decorated church dedicated to St. Anne,

the mother of the Blessed Virgin, whose native place was Seforis. A steep and rugged road conducts the traveller from Cana to Nazareth, winding up a narrow gorge, where the horses can barely keep their footing on the pointed sloping slabs; but the view from the top, looking down on Nazareth and the plain on the one side, and Cana and Seforis on the other, is unequalled even in that land of beautiful and sacred memories. One more quiet Sunday did our travellers spend in that spot so associated with our Blessed Lord's boyhood and youth; and then the time came for them to leave their kind hosts and pursue their journey to Carmel.

After early Mass, one of the travellers crossed the court and entered the convent-parlour, where she was to take leave of the Padre Guardiano. She found him carefully packing for her the 'Sacro Bambino,' that waxen image of our Lord's infancy, which, manufactured annually for the Grotto of the Nativity, remains at Bethlehem during the whole of the solemn octave in that sacred shrine, and then, with the seal of its authenticity attached, is sent to Nazareth, and from thence, year by year, forwarded to churches in far-off lands. Gratefully did she accept it for a church very dear to her heart in her own land, the beautiful church of the Oblates of St. Charles. And then she stood listening to his few parting words of kindness and loving counsel.

'I have nothing of value to give you, my child,' said the old man in conclusion; 'nothing but this, the Breviary given me by the Bishop who ordained me in the Tyrol many years ago. See! it has the picture in it of my patron saint, St. Wenceslaus, and of our Franciscan brethren who were martyred in Japan. Take the book and read it daily, in remembrance of me.'

Sorrowfully the lady received his parting gift and blessing, and mounting, rode away. As she reached the brow of the hill she looked back, and still saw the brown figure of the kind old monk standing watching her from the convent-door. It was the last time she was to see him on earth.

A few months later, a malignant fever which broke out at Tiberias carried off the Franciscan priest who served the little church of St. Peter there. The Padre Guardiano instantly set off to replace him till a successor could be appointed. But the same poisonous air rapidly filled his veins; he fell sick the following day, and in less than twenty-four hours the end came. He died alone and untended, save by a poor Greek priest, who came to administer to him the last rites of the Church. Yet surely other ministries waited, unseen, around that dying bed; and, the dark river past, those words must have echoed in his ears: '*Euge, serve bone et fidelis; quia in pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.*'

CARMEL.

CHAPTER IX.

CARMEL AND BEYROUT.

BEAUTIFUL CARMEL! No one who has spent three or four months in traversing the rugged and arid tracks which characterise Syrian travel can fail to be struck with the wonderful fertility and beauty of the park-like ground to which you ascend after leaving the marshy swamps of the Kishon, on the road from Nazareth to 'Mohrakah,' the undoubted site of the sacrifice of Elias. The so-called 'Forest' of Carmel scarcely deserves its name in the English sense, but is more like a glade in our forest scenery, reminding one also of the Tyrol; with dwarf oak, bay, carouba, arbutus, and a multitude of flowering and aromatic shrubs; the sweet-scented olive, with its pale-yellow clusters; the mastic, with its pendent white bell-shaped blossoms, and the delicate purple acacia; while cistus, white and lilac, in full flower, colour the ground for miles. All the similes of the Book of Canticles find their natural explanation here: 'My head is like Carmel;' 'How beautiful art thou, and how comely!'

Scrambling through this thicket of shrubs, our

travellers arrived at last at a magnificent amphitheatre, in the centre of which was a fountain, and by its side a beautiful Turkey oak, under the shade of which they agreed to rest during the burning heat of noonday. The hewn stones at their feet marked the site of the altar which Elias rebuilt: from this very fountain must the water have been drawn which filled the trench before the sacrifice was offered—that sacrifice which, in its accomplishment, was to vindicate the majesty of God in the sight of His chosen people. Here again, after the atonement had been made by the death of the idolatrous priests by the river Kishon, the welcome rain was obtained in answer to the prophet's prayer. The view on all sides is grand in the extreme, embracing the whole of Central Palestine, with the Plain of Esdraelon, and Tabor, and the 'Cities of the Plain,' Nain and Shunem, Megiddo and Jezreel. From the place of sacrifice the path leads through the native village of Espya to a high ridge covered with flowers and aromatic shrubs; and thence a ride of seven or eight hours through lovely scenery brings you to the Convent of Mount Carmel, built on a promontory overlooking the sea, with the little town of Caiffa nestling at its feet. Our travellers, although with a Carmelite Friar for their guide, missed the right track, and found themselves, at ten o'clock at night, in a deep ravine, from whence apparently there was no exit except

by the road through which they had come. But a Bedouin shepherd took pity on their exhausted condition, and showed them a path which led them at last to the convent gates, after more than twelve hours in the saddle. There the usual hospitable welcome awaited them, though no longer from their much-loved Franciscan Fathers. Carmel is the head-quarters of the Discalced Carmelites, who received the rules of their Order from Albert, the holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the year 1205. The convent is a very spacious building, with a fine domed chapel; and the whole was built from the alms collected by a single monk, who visited Europe for that purpose.

Early the following morning, the solemn mass for the 'Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin on Mount Carmel' was said for the pilgrims in the beautiful church built over the cavern which tradition points out as the residence of the prophet Elias. A subterranean chapel occupies this spot, above which a double flight of steps leads up to the high altar. After mass, one of the Carmelite fathers volunteered to conduct their guests to the 'School of the Prophets,' which is a cave below the convent garden, overlooking the sea, and to which the descent is steep and difficult. Following the zigzag path to the left is the chapel of St. Simon Stock, an Englishman, who, in the thirteenth century, spent six years on Mount Carmel, leading an aus-

tere life of penance and of prayer. His eminent piety caused him to be elected general of his Order; soon after which he instituted the Confraternity of the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin, a devotion as to which he was instructed in a vision by the Mother of God herself. His chapel is now being beautifully restored by an English lady, whose little girl had a singular devotion to the spot. The intense heat prevented our travellers from continuing their explorations towards the wine-presses, which still remain on the slopes of Carmel, sole vestiges of its ancient fertility; for no vineyards now clothe those arid hills. Sadly and literally is the prophecy fulfilled: 'He shall not tread out wine in the press that was wont to tread it out. Gladness and joy shall be taken away from Carmel, and there shall be no rejoicing or shouting in the vineyards.'

Returning to the convent, they ascended to the roof of the dome, from whence a magnificent view was obtained on all sides; and then re-entering the church, where a beautiful image of the Mother of God was exposed, one of the party kneeling at the high altar received the scapular from the hands of the venerable Superior. 'Ecce signum salutis; salus in periculis, fœdus pacis et pacti sempiterni!' With the words of the exhortation still sounding in her ears and the prayer in her heart, 'Constantiam bene perseverandi,' the English traveller bid

adieu with the rest of her party to their kind entertainers, and descended the steep hill leading to Caiffa. It is a dirty straggling little town, with nothing to recommend it except the Convent of the Dames de Nazareth and the hospitable house of the English Consul, himself a man of great ability and talent, though for the moment buried in this quiet spot. From Caiffa our travellers galloped along the beautiful smooth sands towards Acre. The sea-shore is covered with shells, especially the murex, a beautiful violet-tinted donax, and above all the lovely purple haliotis, the 'ianthina fragilis,' supposed to have been used for the ancient Tyrian dye, which some of the party could not resist dismounting to pick up. Presently they came to 'that ancient river, the river Kishon,' which, swollen by a flood, compelled them to cross it in boats, while their horses swam alongside. A ride of two hours more, and the fording of the 'Belus,' now a shallow stream, brought them to the gates of Acre. Here, again, they found their old Franciscan friends; and leaving their horses at the convent gates, they started to inspect the fortifications, under the guidance of one of the Fathers, and afterwards visited the church and palace of the Knights of St. John, sole remains of the good old times of the Crusaders, now in the hands of the Greek Catholics. The once magnificent cathedral is in ruins; but a portion of it has been restored,

and is used by the Franciscans as their church. Our travellers lingered so long in this interesting spot that the sun had set before they thought of remounting, and the guards at the gate demurred at letting them out of the city. But a 'bakshesh' from the dragoman opened the way, and the party galloped rapidly on, past a beautiful villa, with groups of palm-trees, interspersed with orange, lemon, and pomegranate gardens, towards their tenting-ground, which they reached by moonlight at ten o'clock. The muleteers had, however, disobeyed their orders, in order to save themselves trouble—a common trick in the East—and had pitched the tents in a swampy ground, which seemed to breathe nothing but malaria and fever. But it was too late to change; so, hastily dining, our travellers threw themselves on their little camp-beds, resolving to start by peep of day the following morning; and thus, if possible, to avoid the evil consequences of the obstinacy of their Arab attendants. Daybreak accordingly found them in the saddle; and passing very sorrowfully the boundary between Palestine and Syria, they commenced the steep and perilous ascent over the magnificent cliffs which bear the name of the 'Ladder of Tyre.' No parapet protects the path on the shelving rock; and on several occasions the mules, with their loads, seemed on the point of slipping three hundred feet down into the sea. The cliffs were covered

with wild pinks, red and white, and with a beautiful bright lavender-coloured immortelle, of which the Bedouins gathered great bunches to decorate their horses. The travellers rested for luncheon amid the ruins of an old Phœnician city, called in the Syrian tongue 'Iskanderyeh.' It had the remains of a fine aqueduct and of a tesselated pavement still in perfect preservation. From this halting-place a gallop along a belt of smooth sand brought them to the base of a fresh cliff called the Ras el Abiad, or 'White Head;' a still more dangerous and precipitous ascent than the last, but from whence the most beautiful panoramic view was obtained of Tyre and Sidon and the curved line of the sandy shores, on which rippled the blue sea; while inland, above the fertile plain, rose the magnificent range of violet-coloured mountains, snowy Hermon towering, as usual, above the whole. Descending the 'White Head,' and passing by a beautiful ruined aqueduct covered with maiden-hair fern, and other creepers, a couple of hours' ride brought them into the dirty and straggling streets of Tyre. The Jesuits have established a large school in the town, which has offshoots in the surrounding villages; and one of the Fathers kindly volunteered to be the cicerone of the travellers to the cathedral, once the finest church in Syria, said to have been built by the Empress Helena. It is in the Byzantine style, but only the western wall

and a few buttresses remain to show its size and ancient grandeur. Eusebius wrote the consecration sermon for the opening of this church. Paulinus and William of Tyre sat in its episcopal chair. Here Origen was buried, and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. But its glories are indeed departed. Filthy Moslem huts are crowded into its ruined aisles; broken columns and fragments of porphyry and granite are strewed on all sides. This cathedral is but a type of everything in this once magnificent seaport. All the ancient prophecies of her desolation are literally fulfilled: 'What city is like Tyre, which is become silent in the midst of the sea?' 'They shall lay thy stones and thy timber in the midst of the water.' 'The waters have covered her. She is a place for fishermen to spread their nets.'

Our party pitched their tents outside the town on the bright sandy shore, close to the fountain called Hiram's Well; and the kind Father —— sat drinking coffee with them at the open tent-door, talking of his mission and its success, when suddenly a wonderful storm burst on the beautiful mountains which stretched beyond the desolate Phœnician plain before them, lighting up snowy Hermon with the most vivid and lurid brightness, and throwing purple and pink and violet tints on the mounds and villages in the middle distance, the brilliancy of which one of the travellers in vain

endeavoured to render on her drawing-paper. The storm subsiding, they made an expedition to Hiram's tomb, a great sarcophagus erected on a pedestal of square stone about four or five miles from the city, with a deep well on one side and the ruins of a once enclosed garden on the other, full of wild-orange and pomegranate trees in full blossom.

The following morning by four o'clock the party left the beautiful but desolate city, and crossing the Leontes, struck upwards from the seashore to the old town of Sarepta, the scene of the miracle of the widow's cruse. Not a house remains on the original site, for the modern village has migrated up the hill. Only a few square stones are left, and the ruins of an early Christian chapel erected where our divine Lord is said to have rested when travelling through the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Here the storm, which had long been gathering in the mountains, burst with full force upon our travellers; but shelter being out of the question, they were compelled to brave it; and after fording one or two small rivers, fringed with pink oleanders in full flower, arrived within sight of the beautiful orange and citron groves which surround Saida, the ancient Sidon. It is situated, like Tyre, on a projecting isthmus, with a ledge of rocks and broken columns running out into the sea, but is a great contrast in the wonderful fertility and culture of its

environs. Our dripping travellers were most courteously received by the French Consul, who gave up the rooms of his wife and daughter to the ladies; while the gentlemen were equally hospitably lodged at the Franciscan convent, which forms the opposite side of the square court-yard. This shelter was the more welcome, as the baggage mules having floundered in the Nahr-ez-Zaherany, or 'Flowery River,' with the tents and luggage, their beds and everything else were soaked through and through.

Here they first came upon the traces of that horrible massacre which three or four years ago filled the hearts of all Europe with horror. Upwards of eighteen hundred Christians perished in Saida in the month of June 1860, in that outburst of Mohammedan and Druse fury, among whom were above one hundred and twenty priests and religious of various orders, both men and women. The cruelties and insults wreaked on the victims rival the scenes of the Indian mutiny; and again, there was the same misplaced confidence in the native honour. The venerable Jesuit Fathers, P. Rousseau and P. Pounière, at the risk of their lives, determined to bury the bodies of the victims assassinated outside the gates, especially that of the Vicar-General; and of the Bishop, Monsignor Boutros, whose body, cut in half-a-dozen pieces and part of it already devoured by dogs, was discovered with those of twelve other priests and several laymen within

ten minutes' walk of the town. The horrible stench and the dreadful state of mutilation of the bodies rendered this heroic service one of real martyrdom.*

The Sisters of St. Joseph have a large school and orphanage adjoining the Franciscan convent; but they 'hold their lives in their hands,' as all must do who labour in this land, and who have learned by bitter experience the treachery and fanaticism by which they are surrounded, and which it requires but a spark to kindle anew. After early mass the following morning in the chapel of the convent, the French Consul took his guests to visit the port, which was originally a very spacious one, and is still strewed with fragments of porphyry columns and hewn granite stones, which must have formed portions of the quays. A fine ruined tower and a bridge of several arches connects the northern end of the city with the port. On these rocks must St. Paul have landed; and here too may our blessed Lord have trod, for the only way from Sidon to Tyre is along this shore.

The day was fine and bright when our travellers, taking leave of their kind hosts, and purchasing from the clamorous vendors some of the beautiful gold coins of Philip of Macedon and of Alexander, recently discovered in one of the gardens of the

* The Père R. P. Rousseau and the Sister Rosa, Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, subsequently sank from typhus caught in tending the wounds of the survivors among the Christians.

consulate, rode through the lovely Saida orange and acacia groves loaded with fruit and flowers, on the path leading to Beyrout. The first river was crossed without difficulty, and a turn in the road brought them to a village where a Mohammedan wely or chapel is erected to mark the spot where the prophet Jonah is said to have been cast on the shore out of the belly of the whale. Sycamore, fig, date, palm, mulberry, and olive trees gave a pleasant shade for the noonday halt. But another river had to be forded, the Dafour, about which the guides had been whispering in evident anxiety, owing to the recent heavy rains. At Saida a report was current that some travellers had been drowned in it the day before; and on arriving at its swollen and flooded banks the leader of the party thought with dismay of the evident risk to which her children would be exposed. There was, however, no going back, and no boat could be obtained, as at the Kishon; so plunging boldly in, with the strongest and most expert swimmers among the escort leading the horses of the younger ones, the river was entered and safely crossed. Lighting a fire on the seashore to dry their dripping habits, the party watched with anxiety the passage of their baggage. But it was accomplished in safety with one exception; a mule loaded with saddle-bags was carried away by the violence of the current and drowned, while the contents of his pack, though

recovered, were irretrievably ruined. Thankful, however, for no worse mischance, our travellers remounted and trotted on towards Beyrout, the approach to which is perfectly beautiful, through a succession of stone pine-woods, with the glorious Lebanon mountains on the right, the lower spurs of which were covered with villas and gardens and woods, a picturesque convent crowning each tiny eminence, and the whole combining every thing that is most lovely in nature and in art. It reminds one of the view of Fiesole from San Miniato, only that of Beyrout is far more rich and beautiful. The French, during their two years' occupation, constructed a fine carriage-road from Beyrout to Damascus—the *only* one in Syria—and two carriages, which look as if they had come out of the Ark, have been imported in consequence. One of these nondescript vehicles met our travellers near the entrance of the town, and here a ludicrous accident was the result. Their horses had never before seen a carriage of any description. Such a thing is unknown in Palestine. The consequence was, that no persuasion could induce their steeds to pass or go near this terrible machine; and one of the party, determined to conquer what he considered the obstinacy of his beast, was violently thrown from the saddle. It was fortunate that evening had closed in before arriving at the hotel to which (for the first time in Syria) they were

bound; for, with their clothes deeply stained with the yellow mud of the Dafour and torn into shreds by the prickly-pear hedges, and their hats equally shapeless from the storms of Saida, our travellers presented the most sorry and ludicrous appearance possible.

The following morning found two of the party in the narrow street leading by a picturesque fountain to the Franciscan convent; but though it was only half-past six the last mass was over. There were but two Fathers belonging to this mission, to which no hospice for pilgrims is attached; but they courteously received the ladies in a large room hung with portraits of Franciscan martyrs, and the curious genealogical tree of their order, and offered them coffee and breakfast. The ladies, however, were anxious for a mass, and so asked for a guide to show them the way to the Jesuit church, which was instantly accorded to them. It is in the upper part of the town, near the eastern gate; and the travellers found themselves in a building crowded to excess, with a large school of boys at one end, and a multitude of Syrian women, in their white abbas, squatted behind a screen at the other. The seven o'clock mass was over, but another was beginning; and thankfully did one of the pair avail herself of the offer of one of the elder boys to leave the crowded Arab women's quarter for a place nearer the altar, and close to a beautiful picture of the

'Pieta.' After mass they were shown the schools, which contain upwards of five hundred boys, most of them the sole survivors of their families from the Lebanon massacres. They were preparing for a holiday and an expedition into the mountains, with their kind Superior, the Père G——, a name once so well known in the Paris and London world, and now as eminent for his labours of love among the little flock intrusted to him by the Great Shepherd.

After breakfast our travellers visited the immense establishment of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, which is the glory and pride of Beyrout. Entering by a gateway, on which the simple word 'Caritas' is inscribed, you come into a square court, round which are built eight schools for different classes of girls, including one for the training of mistresses, and a beautiful chapel, which, however, the increasing number of their *pensionnaires* is obliging them to enlarge. The education given by the Sisters is admirable in every respect. Leading out of the *parloir* is a garden full of beautiful flowers, and at one end is the hospital and dispensary, crowded at all hours by the native sick. Beyond this garden is another large square, forming, in fact, a separate establishment, and containing between eight and nine hundred orphans, made such by the late massacres. Nothing can be more beautifully managed than this vast establishment by these noble and devoted women. Well may the

Sisters of Charity be called, by a noted ecclesiastic, 'the salt of the earth.' If in Europe their loving step is every where hailed with thankfulness and joy, in the East they are the pioneers of civilisation, the evangelisers of races, the regenerators of the whole country. Held in affectionate veneration alike by Arab and Moslem, Druse and Maronite, to whose physical wants and sufferings they are ever ministering without distinction of creed, they alone escaped in the hour of fanatical fury. But it is especially in the training of children that they are doing a work for God in those lands, which must be seen in order to be realised. One of the prettiest sights in the world might be seen in the large *parloir* at Beyrout on a Sunday. The Sisters have now been established there for fifteen or sixteen years, and can see the fruit of their work. On that day a crowd of young mothers, who have each and all been educated by the Sisters, come in from the mountains and villages round to bring their children to the Venerable Sœur Supérieure Gélas, and to take part again in the beautiful service which their girlhood has been taught to love. Her loving motherly arms were clasped round many a bright and smiling face, while the little ones nestled at her feet, all anxious to win from her a kiss or a smile, or else playing gently with the black rosary by her side. She has established, in addition to all her other works, an infant nursery in the hills,

where such of the orphans as are too young or too sickly to thrive in the confined atmosphere of the town are reared and nursed by peasant women, under the Sisters' direction. From time to time she visits these her babies, riding on her white donkey, loved and respected by every one she meets. In the hospital, one of our travellers spoke to a Scotch engineer who had been badly scalded in one of the Pasha's steamers. He said, almost with tears, 'What should I have done without this place to come to? I have suffered a great deal, it is true; but I have only got to turn in my bed for one of those kind gentle faces to come up and ask me whether I do not want something.'

But their Orphanage is now in great straits. When the news of the terrible massacre reached Europe, and the statistics mounted up to between sixteen and seventeen thousand victims, the heart of every one was opened to alleviate the misery, and large sums poured in to the Sisters for the support of the hundreds of helpless orphans whom they had rescued. But now the excitement has passed away, and with it the interest in this great work. People forget so soon sorrows in which they have no personal share. *Yet the children are still there*, needing, equally now as then, food and clothing and shelter. No other homes are open to receive them, for are they not fatherless and motherless? It will still be some years before they

can leave the shelter of the Sisters' home, and be old enough to earn their own livelihood. And in the meantime what are the Sisters to do? How are these poor little ones to be clothed and fed? May the hearts of the Catholics of Europe, but especially of England, be moved to send fresh help to these suffering children, so that the noble work of these self-denying women may be fully and fairly accomplished!*

The sun was scarcely risen the following morning when two of our travellers started on an expedition to visit the interesting village of Deir-el-Kahmar. Their road lay through the pine-forest outside the town, and through hedges of prickly-pear, pomegranates, and olives, till it began to wind up the steep mountain-path, or rather staircase, formed of smooth slabs, which leads to the picturesque convent of Ain-Braba. From thence they had the most glorious view of Beyrout, with its white houses and golden sands, and the bright blue sea beyond glistening in the rising sun, while date-palms and magnificent stone-pines formed the foreground of the picture. Oleanders blossomed by every rushing stream, and the ground was carpeted with pink linum, cyclamen, and other spring flowers. Ascending still higher, they came on a wayside khan,

* Subscriptions for this object will be gladly received by Lady Herbert, 38 Chesham Place, London, or by the Sister Superior of the Sisters of Charity, Carlisle Place, Westminster.

looking down on a magnificent valley, with a rapid river at the bottom, over which a picturesque bridge was thrown, to which they cautiously descended by a path which was bad and perilous even for Syrian roads. Then reascending on the opposite side, through an underwood of ilex, arbutus, myrtle, and cypress, a sharp turn in the road brought them within sight of the mountain village they had come to visit, called Deir-el-Kahmar, or 'Mountain of the Moon,' from the large figure of the Blessed Virgin standing on the moon, carved on the outside of the convent-wall. At the head of the valley, projecting boldly against the spur of the mountain, is Beteddin, the beautiful palace of the Emirs of the Lebanon.

Their tents being pitched in an orchard at the entrance of the town, the travellers started to deliver their letters of introduction to the Superior of the Jesuit Mission, the Père B., whom they soon found, encouraging a troop of young Christian volunteers, who were drilling on the plain outside the town under the instruction of an old French sergeant. The Père B. took the English ladies to his ruined convent, part of which has been lately rebuilt, together with the little church and a rude school, where two Sisters of Charity were occupied in giving a working lesson to about fifty native children. Terrible was the account given by him of the horrors of the massacre in 1860, during

which he escaped as by a miracle.* Trusting in the promises of the Turks, and the still more specious assurances of the Druses, the Christians refused to listen to his earnest words of warning. When the massacre began, on the 20th of June, 1,500 of the Christians, with their valuables, took refuge in the governor's house, believing in his solemn assurance of safety and protection. But an hour or two later the Druses were admitted by the Turkish soldiers themselves into the seraglio, and the work of massacre began.

The Père B. took our travellers to the courtyard where this horrible butchery was effected. Not content with murder, they tortured and mutilated their victims, especially the women and children, cutting off their fingers and toes one by one; and when some clasped their crucifixes in their agony, blasphemous taunts were added to the rest. 'Call now on your God, and see if He will come and help you!' Among the victims was M. Bischarra Soussa, one of the richest inhabitants of the place, and an intimate friend of the governor's. He was one of the earliest to take refuge in his house at the first rumour of danger, and refused to follow the counsel of the priest to escape to Beyrout, saying, 'that with the friendship of the governor he

* His descriptions were confirmed in all points by other eye-witnesses, as well as by a pamphlet entitled, 'Histoire des Massacres de Syrie en 1860,' par François Lenormant.

was perfectly safe.' He had just married a beautiful young wife of twenty-one, who had been educated at the school of the Sisters of Charity, and spoke French and several other languages fluently. When the rest of the Christians had been butchered, Bischarra Soussa and his wife were summoned by the governor to descend into the court. In an instant the whole peril of their position burst upon them. The unhappy man threw himself at the feet of the governor, and implored him to spare his life and that of his wife. The governor coolly turned from him to a Druse standing by, and said, 'Despatch him.' Bischarra then offered everything he had in the world in exchange for his life. They pretended to accept the conditions, and made him sign a deed conveying to them his whole fortune. This done, the assassins formed a circle round him, and having garotted and thrown him naked on the floor, they strewed gunpowder over him, to which they set fire. They then endeavoured to skin him alive; but finding the operation too slow, dismembered him by degrees; and his wife was forced to be present during the whole of this horrible scene. From the governor's house the murderers proceeded to the convent and church, where a small number of Christians had taken refuge. In this case they were given the alternative of apostasy or death. They all chose the latter. Twenty priests, kneeling at the

foot of the altar with their arms extended in the form of a cross, received the palm of martyrdom, the Druses in the meanwhile ringing the church-bells in derision, and calling out to the people to 'come to the mass of their priests.' The Superior was reserved for more terrible torments. Stripped naked, he was first scalped, 'to renew the tonsure,' they said; then with long knives they carved the patterns of his sacerdotal vestments on his back and chest, and finally beheaded him.

More than two thousand victims perished on that awful day. When, a few weeks later, the French troops took possession of the town, they found the mutilated bodies still unburied, having been simply thrown over the wall of the court into the field below. Yet the principal instigators of these horrible deeds remain unpunished. It is true that the Druses and Mohammedans have for the moment been banished from the village, and the Christians are endeavouring in every way to fortify their position in case of a future outbreak. But everything points to further dangers for the Christians of Syria; and the day when the fear of foreign intervention shall be removed from the mind of the Turk will be the signal for a fresh outburst of fanatical fury, in accordance with the Friday's prayer in every mosque, 'that the Cross may be uprooted from the soil of Islam.'

The Père B., from whom our travellers received

these terrible details, escaped through the fidelity of an Arab, whose life he had saved on some previous occasion, and who conveyed him secretly in the night to Beyrout, together with a young schoolmaster whom he had persuaded to accompany him.

On the following morning our travellers assisted at the mass performed in the newly-rebuilt church of the convent, on the very site so recently watered by the blood of the martyrs; and to judge by the fervour and devotion of the large congregation, the terrible scenes of late years had not been without their fruit. After mass the Père B. accompanied the travellers to the beautiful but now ruined palace of the Christian emirs, called Beteddin, by a steep and perilous descent, where the horses could with difficulty keep their footing. The situation of the palace is quite magnificent; and its architecture and decorations equal the most gorgeous of the Italian palaces. But now all has been destroyed. The beautiful Venetian mosaic, with its elaborate patterns; the rare marbles and agates which panelled the walls,—all are battered into small pieces. The luxurious baths have shared the same fate; the fountains are choked with sand and filth. In the midst of the desolation beautiful roses and ferns were springing out of the ruins, as if nature would efface the mischief which the wanton hand of man had caused. Broken columns; fragments of statues

and of exquisitely-coloured tiles; beautifully-painted door-cases, and other vestiges of art and luxury, lay scattered about in every direction; while in the midst of all, dark-red patches here and there and crimson stains told of the fearful deeds of silent horror perpetrated on that fearful day which had made this earthly paradise a byword for desolation.

Our travellers sat on the terrace in the once lovely but now neglected garden, looking down on the glorious view in the gorge below, and wishing that some English millionaire would come and restore a place so unequalled in all the world for beauty of natural position. A pretty Christian child brought them coffee and sweetmeats, with bunches of roses, jasmine, and honeysuckle; and a native 'sais' pointed out the magnificent stables, capable of containing five hundred horses, which were erected under the arches of the spacious square leading into the garden. The Père B. told them that a multitude of little children were found concealed in the courts and rooms of the palace after the massacre was over; and these were rescued by the Sisters of Charity, and brought to their Beyrout orphanage.

A few hours later, our traveller was among those very children in their happy convent-home—for to-morrow was to be a grand day at the orphanage. M. de S. was on his visitation-tour, and was coming to give the 'First Communion' to all those whom

the Lazarist fathers and the Sisters judged fit for the sacred rite. But the lady, leaving the children and Sisters, who were preparing the chapel for the morrow's ceremony, descended the stairs, and turned with the kind and gentle Superior into a corridor on the ground-floor, which led into the children's hospital. In one of the little beds was the figure of a beautiful child of fourteen, evidently in the last stage of consumption. She and her little sister were the sole survivors of a family of ten, murdered one by one on that fatal day in that beautiful palace of Beteddin. Her constitution had never recovered the frightful shock; but her gentleness and goodness had endeared her to every one around her. 'How is Marie this evening?' asked the Superior of a nursing Sister, whom they met on entering the dormitory. 'She is sinking, I fear, ma sœur,' was the reply, 'but good and patient as ever; and now only waiting and longing for *that*,' she added with a smile, pointing to a little white veil which hung on a chair beside her.

A bright gleam lit up the young girl's dying face as her visitors approached; while the traveller, drawing from her basket two framed casts of Jesus and of Mary, proceeded to hang them on the wall opposite her bed, and to decorate them with the flowers she had brought. 'These roses are from your old home, dear child. We must make your room bright, you know, for *to-morrow*,' said the

lady, in answer to the questioning look of the dying child; who gently murmured, as she kissed her, 'O, thank you so much! How good every one is to me! *It will not be long to wait.*'

And now the morning is come, and two hundred and fifty young souls dressed in white, with wreaths of white roses and soft white veils, are kneeling in that beautiful chapel to receive for the first time the Bread of Life. Marie, too, has been dressed in white in her little bed; but not more pure are the roses round her head or the lilies by her pictures, than is that spotless soul, sighing but for one thing —to receive her Lord before she departs to see Him face to face. Round her neck she wears the blue ribbon and medal of the 'Enfans de Marie,' which she has likewise received on that day, in compliance with her earnest wish. And now the bell is heard and the light approaches, while the attendant Sisters devoutly kneel. A moment more, and she has received Him whom she has so loved and trusted in here. A few moments later, she was with Him in His kingdom.

CHAPTER X.

DAMASCUS AND THE LEBANON.

On a lovely morning towards the end of April 186—, our travellers started from Beyrout along the beautiful road which the French have left as a valuable memento of their two years' occupation, and began to mount the steep range of the Anti-Lebanon mountains on their way to Damascus. Passing through the scented pine-woods, and leaving the beautiful village of Beit Miry on their left, they soon got into the region of clouds and mist, which speedily turned into rain so violent that their horses would not face it, and they were compelled to take shelter for some time in the rude hut of a 'cantinier,' whose merry little French wife proceeded to dry the cloaks of the dripping travellers and prepare hot coffee, while she chattered on about her 'experience of life' since she came to '*ce pays de barbares*,' whither she had accompanied her husband four years before. The storm having slightly abated, the party remounted, and, after a somewhat wearisome ride, found their tents pitched in what the Americans would call a 'dreary swindle

swamp,' some way below the road, which the recent heavy rains had converted into a sea of liquid mud. However keen may be one's appreciation of the pleasures of tent-life, it must be allowed that on occasions of this sort the best of tempers is likely to feel some irritation. The water dripping slowly through one corner or the other of one's tent, soaking by degrees one's carpet and one's bed, one's clothes all moist, one's shoes disappearing in a mud which is as sticky as a Wiltshire chalk-pit after rain,—are minor miseries which it is easier to laugh at afterwards than at the time. Our travellers, in consequence, made as early a start as possible the following morning; and after riding for about ten miles through a somewhat uninteresting plain, arrived at a beautiful mountain pass, which brought them down to the shores of the river Abana, a bright rushing stream, alongside of which the road winds all the way to Damascus, bordered on each side by poplar, walnut, orange, apricot and other fruit trees. It is impossible to say how beautiful the effect of this mass of green was to eyes so long accustomed to the barren tracts of Palestine. Five or six miles farther on, the beautiful city burst upon our travellers like a dream of the Arabian Nights, with its graceful minarets, its domes glistening in the setting sun, and the beautiful background of mountains, with Hermon in the centre, forming altogether a really unrivalled pa-

norama. It was dark when the party reached the comfortable hotel, where friendly voices were waiting to greet them; and a delicious marble-paved sitting room, with a fountain playing in the centre, and raised divans on either side, formed a luxurious contrast to their discomforts the evening before. The following morning Padre L—— conducted one of the party through the dirty and crowded bazaars, and past the largest plane-tree in the world, to the Franciscan convent at the other end of the town, the sole remains of what was once the wealthy and flourishing Christian quarter. A temporary church has been erected adjoining the convent, where mass is daily performed.

After the horrible massacres in the Lebanon during the months of May and June 1860,* the European consuls became naturally alarmed for the safety of the 25,000 or 30,000 Christians who, at that time, were the richest and most peaceable inhabitants of Damascus. They went in a body to Achmet Pasha, the governor, to ask him, in the name of their respective Governments, if he would answer for the safety of the Christians. He reassured them with the most specious promises, pretending that the Lebanon massacres were only the result of a quarrel between two hostile nations, the Druses and the Maronites; but that, under the

* This description is taken from a pamphlet by M. Lenormant, entitled, 'Histoire des Massacres de Syrie,' en 1860.

protection of the Sublime Porte, they might rest in perfect security. In spite of these assurances, however, a general uneasiness prevailed. M. Lanusse, who was acting at the moment for the French consul, and M. Spartalis, the Greek consul, went to the principal chiefs among the Mahometans, and endeavoured to ascertain from them what was the extent of the danger with which they were threatened. The principal sheik resorted to the same dissimulation as the governor, but his colleague was more honest: 'You must, I fear, expect a rising,' he said. 'More than eighteen hundred guns have been distributed among the people in the last few days; be sure these are not for your protection.' This was on the 3rd July. The following days were spent in preparations for resistance on the part of the Christians, and insults on the side of the Mahometans, who entered the houses of the Sisters of Charity and of the missionaries, exclaiming, 'Very soon we shall be masters here. Your churches will make beautiful mosques!' They traced crosses on the ground, and obliged the Christians whom they met in the street to walk over them amidst shouts of derision; other crosses they tied round the necks of the dogs (who swarm in Damascus), so as to insult still further the sign of our redemption.

On the 9th July the massacre began, at the very hour when the cry from the muezzin sum-

moned the faithful to prayer. There was not a single Druse or Bedouin then at Damascus; the outrage was purely Mahometan. They entered in squadrons into the Christian quarter, pillaging, burning, murdering, and insulting every human being, sparing neither age nor sex; and these horrors lasted for five days! The Franciscan missioners from the Holy Land were among the first victims. They had been advised to make their escape. 'Why should we be afraid?' they replied. 'We have never done anything but good to the Mussulmans; their children attend our classes, and love us as their fathers. Besides, our house is under the protection of France.' An hour after the outbreak began, their convent was surrounded and broken into. The Franciscans ran into their chapel, and knelt round the altar, with about fifty other Christians who had taken refuge there. They were given the choice of apostasy or death. All chose the latter. A Turk mounted into the belfry. They had agreed that at each stroke of the bell a Franciscan should fall. At the first stroke they called out, 'The first mass for the Emperor Napoleon!' and the head of the first priest rolled on the pavement. The tragedy was continued for each. At the last the cry was, 'Last mass for those who have the habit of attending this cursed place!' and the body of the Superior fell on the steps and at the foot of the altar.

After the Franciscan martyrdoms were over, the assassins went on to the house of the Sisters of Charity and the Pères Lazaristes, a magnificent establishment, of which the construction had cost an immense sum, and which had been founded by the Rev. Père Leroy. But the noble Emir, Abd-el-Kader, who at the first sound of the massacre had hastened from his villa into the town with a body of faithful Algerian followers, had taken instant measures for the safety of both the Sisters and their spiritual Fathers. He and his noble band found them all, priests, sisters, and orphans, grouped in the chapel expecting instant death. The priests, hastily consuming the Sacred Host in the Tabernacle, followed their deliverers with the Sisters of Charity and two hundred young girls belonging to their school, and arrived in safety at Abd-el-Kader's house. The murderers therefore found no victims on whom to wreak their fury, but revenged themselves by destroying the house, with everything it contained. The venerable Père Leroy died of grief, a few days after, at seeing the destruction of the work to which he had devoted his whole life and all the efforts of his charity. Not a church or convent was spared; they did not leave one stone upon the other. Eleven churches were rased to the ground. Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Maronite were equally the objects of Mahometan fury. The houses of the Greek Patriarchs were pillaged

and burnt. All this time the governor remained quietly in the citadel, and, like Nero at the burning of Rome, watched the massacre from his windows, and caused military airs to be played to drown the cries of his victims.

Among the sufferers was a venerable old man named Francis Moussabeki, whose generous hospitality was known to all European visitors. He was a rich Maronite merchant, and had lent a large sum to one of the Mussulman sheiks. As soon as the butchery began, his creditor sent two men to murder him. They offered him, as usual, death or apostasy. 'Let Abdallah keep my money if he chooses,' said the old man. "As to myself, I shall not deny my Saviour. He has taught me not to fear those who kill the body, but those who would tempt me to lose my soul. I am a Christian, and so will I die!' Saying these words, he fell on his knees, and in a moment the faithful martyr had received his palm.

Abd-el-Kader all this time had not been idle. He had brought the European consuls and their families to his house as well as the Sisters of Charity and the priests, and now exerted himself to save all he could among the unfortunate Christian population. By night he and his noble band had made seven separate sallies into the town, and had rescued 11,000 men, women, and children, whom he placed in the citadel, besides 3,000 who were

already in his own house. He did this at the peril of his life: six or seven of his escort were killed fighting by his side. The following morning he hastened to the governor, representing the disgrace which would fall on the followers of Islam when such atrocities became known, and imploring him for leave to put an end to a scene so disgraceful. The leave was granted. Arms were sent, and Abd-el-Kader prepared, with his faithful followers, to avenge the murdered Christians, when contrary orders were sent by the governor. '*Do not meddle in this affair*,' was added, and the Emir received privately a notice at the same time, that even the Christians in his own house were not to be spared, 5,000 bandits having been told off to attack it and slaughter the refugees. 'We shall see,' exclaimed the Emir in a tone of fury; and instantly arming the whole of his followers and all the Christians capable of bearing arms, he placed one body in the citadel disguised as Damascus Mussulmans; and gave orders that if his house were attacked, his Algerines should instantly set fire to the town in different quarters, and put Achmet Pasha to death. In the mean time a Druse sheik, friend of M. Spartalis, the Greek consul, arrived with fifteen hundred men in answer to his urgent summons, and placed himself under Abd-el-Kader's orders. This reinforcement turned the tide in another direction, and the assassins contented them-

selves with completing the ruin of the Christian quarter.

The consuls, accompanied by the Père Lazaristes and the Sisters of Charity, then proceeded to the citadel, where the refugees were dying of hunger by hundreds. There a horrible scene presented itself; the dead and the dying were huddled pell-mell together, without food or water, or covering of any kind from the burning heat by day and the icy frosts and heavy dews by night. On the 13th July a new governor replaced Achmet, and order was established; but in the five days' carnage 8,500 Christians had been massacred, 3,800 houses had been burnt, and the pillage of merchandise and valuables was said to exceed in value 100 millions of francs.

The morning passed rapidly while listening to the details above mentioned. A fresh era has begun for the Christians at Damascus; the murdered Franciscan Fathers were so instantly replaced, that the Mussulmans almost believed that their victims had risen from the dead. The energetic French consul has rebuilt the house of the Sisters of Charity, whose return was hailed by all the poorer classes with thankfulness and joy; and the churches are rising again from the mass of ruins which still sadly marks the Christian quarter. How long it will be before a fresh burst of Mussulman ferocity again desolates this beautiful city,

God only knows; but in the meantime the Christians have begun again, in faith and hope, their labours of love; and the seed sown and watered by the blood of martyrs is springing forth, and bearing fruit a hundredfold.

The following day our travellers paid a visit to the beautiful mosque, first a pagan temple, then converted into a Christian basilica, which it continued to be till the fifteenth century, when the Moslems wrested it out of Christian hands. Passing through a very fine brass gate, they came into a beautiful cloistered quadrangle, surrounded by Corinthian columns, with a Saracenic fountain in the centre. The marble pillars in the interior of the mosque, and the mosaics in the roof and on the walls, are still in perfect preservation, and teem with Christian emblems like those of the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, where the cross starts out of its gold ground in every direction, in spite of the Moslem attempts to hide or deface it. The head of St. John the Baptist is believed to be really in existence in this church, and is looked upon with great veneration by the Moslems. Over a magnificent portal the inscription still remains, engraven in Greek: 'Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.' Strangely must the recollection of that silent witness to the truth have occurred to the minds of the martyrs for that

kingdom in those five days of terror. The view from the minaret is perfectly beautiful, overlooking the whole city, surrounded with its glorious gardens and orange-groves and cypresses, with magnificent ranges of mountains on either side.

From the mosque our party went to see the houses of the French and English consuls, as also of several Jews and Moslems. It is impossible to conceive anything more beautiful or more luxurious. They are all of the same type. Emerging from dirty long lanes, and passing through low insignificant doorways, you come suddenly into a court paved with marble, with a fountain in the centre, shaded by oranges, lemons, pomegranates, and other exotics, beautiful roses (of the kind called in England the 'monthly cluster,' a highly-scented one, from which the attar is made), jasmine, and other flowers. From this court opens out a succession of rooms such as are described in the Arabian Nights, the walls covered with mosaic, the ceilings of wood exquisitely carved in the most delicate Saracenic patterns and equally exquisitely coloured with that peculiar blending of shades which none but Orientals understand. In the centre is again a fountain, and at each end of the room a raised divan covered with beautiful Persian carpets, the windows latticed and pierced in the most delicate patterns; beautiful china in niches and other oriental treasures, enamelled narghilehs (pipe-holders),

engraved bowls of silver and platina, into which divers patterns and passages of the Koran are elaborately worked, filigree coffee-cups all glistening with jewels. Such are the houses of the English and French consuls, and such, in a greater or less degree, is the Oriental idea of perfect luxury.

The bazaars at Damascus were also an attraction to our travellers; but, overflowing as they are with treasures, the indifference of the owners to selling or displaying them made the attempts to purchase anything almost hopeless. The engraved metal bowls seen in all the rice, millet, and provision shops, are beautiful in shape and design; but they are heir-looms, and the people will not part with them. Incense is famous at Damascus. There is a peculiar kind prepared from flowers which is more fragrant than any other.

'St. George's' day broke on our party amid torrents of rain; but one of the travellers waded through the mud of the bazaars to the Franciscan church, her donkey on one occasion falling into the middle of a fruit-stall and upsetting the gravity of a venerable Turk, who was gravely sipping his coffee squatted on a bench at the back. Every mass in that week happened to be of *martyrs*; and the words of the Gospels and Collects for each day seemed to come home to the hearts of the hearers with double force in that very spot which had so lately witnessed similar glorious conflicts. 'So con-

firm us by Thy grace in faith and charity, that we may deserve to be found faithful to Thy service even unto death:' the words seemed to have been written on purpose. After mass, the tropical rain having ceased, Padre L. took our party by 'the street called Straight' to the house of Ananias, which being buried, as it were, below the level of the existing buildings, escaped the surrounding destruction. It is fitted up as a little chapel, and mass is occasionally said in it. Continuing along this street they came to the outer wall, and were shown the place where St. Paul is supposed to have been let down in a basket by his disciples, so that he might escape from his persecutors. There is no other religious interest attached to this beautiful town, which for history and antiquity is unrivalled, and deserves its two Arabic appellations of 'pearl of the East' and 'mother of cities.' A few days later, our travellers left Damascus, and riding through groves of fruit-trees and by the rushing waters of the Barada, came suddenly on a beautiful gorge of red-coloured rocks, which led them to the still more exquisite valley of Ain-Fijeh, the spot appointed for their noonday's halt. They rested under the shade of some glorious walnut-trees, close to the largest spring in Syria, which forms the principal source of the Barada. The water leaps rather than bubbles up from the mouth of a cave, and forms a torrent five or six feet deep, clear and

beautiful as crystal. Round this spring are the remains of a temple of Baal, built of very large stones, and of which the ancient pillars overhang the cavern, rather like that of Tivoli. Leaving this lovely spot with great regret, our cavalcade pushed on to Souk, the ancient Abila, winding through rocky glens and by the side of the Barada, with its waterfalls and picturesque bridges. The cliffs were covered with Roman tablets and tombs. After early mass in the tents, the party left Souk for Surghaya, passing by the summer villas of the Damascenes, and through the picturesque town of Zebdâny, which stands in a plain forming the centre of Anti-Lebanon.

From Surghaya a somewhat barren and uninteresting track led our travellers to Baalbec. They halted, before arriving at the temples, near a fountain to the right, containing the purest water in Syria, and close to the remains of a fine Christian basilica. Roberts's drawings and Carl Haag's can alone give an idea of the beauty of Baalbec. In point of position, richness of carving, and size of stones, no other temples can compare with them. Karnac may be grander, but it has not the exquisite tracery and beauty of Baalbec. The Emperor Theodosius converted this great pagan temple of the Sun into a Christian Church, as likewise the one below, now used as a mosque. There is a Greek bishop here, whose convent and church were

destroyed at the time of the massacre, but have now been rebuilt. His flock are few and scattered; but the venerable old man seemed happy and contented with his post.

The following morning Padre L. said mass in his church (the bishop belonging to the 'United' Greeks); and after spending the morning in sketching and wandering over the ruins, the party started after luncheon for Deir-el-Ahmar, galloping across the plain, in which the only object of interest is a solitary Corinthian column about which nothing is known. The people of Deir-el-Ahmar pressed them to rest in one of their orchards, and were very kind and hospitable. The Jesuits have established two Sisters of Charity in this village, to teach in the school. They have about fifty children, and seem to be doing very well; but their life is a very hard one. They asked the party into their hut, which is almost bare of furniture, and gave them lemonade to drink out of a tiny washhand basin; but they seemed contented and happy. From Deir-el-Ahmar the road lay up and down steep glens, thickly wooded with pine and cypress and oak, till they came suddenly on the bleak little village of Ain-Atta, at the foot of the great Lebanon range, and tented close to a beautiful rushing stream in a little grassy glen just under the shoulder of the mountain. The ascent before our travellers began to assume rather formidable proportions. They

were the first who had attempted it so early in the season, and dismal stories had been told them at Damascus of their probable fate if they chose to risk crossing the Lebanon before June. But the old Bishop of Baalbec had reassured them, and they determined to persevere. Rising at two the following morning, Padre L. said mass in the tents, some beautiful white flowers having been found in the glen the night before for the altar; and at half-past three the ascent was begun. A slight shower of rain had increased the difficulty, having melted the outer crust of the snow. Very soon the bravest of the party began to repent of their undertaking. It was impossible to remain on horseback, the poor beasts sinking and slipping at every step, and finally refusing to proceed. Nor did the mules fare any better; so that they had to be unloaded, and their burden transferred to men's backs. But the sufferings of our travellers were repaid by the view which greeted them from the summit. The snow had ceased to fall, and the rising sun lit up what has been described by many travellers as 'the most glorious panorama in the whole world.' Mountains and sea; plains glorious in their vivid spring green; towns and villages glistening in the sunlight by the blue Mediterranean, or nestled in the mountain gorges; and Baalbec standing out alone and unrivalled, with the dark-purple background of the Anti-Lebanon range—form, as a whole, a picture

never to be effaced from the memory. In one little spot to the right stood a dark clump; they were *the* cedars. They seemed so near that our exhausted travellers flattered themselves that they would arrive there almost immediately; but they had three hours more of painful toil down the rocky slope, sinking up to their knees in snowdrifts at every step, and often rolling over altogether. As the snow diminished, beautiful Alpine flowers appeared; snowdrops blue and white, primulas and gentians, and a peculiarly large blue forget-me-not. At eleven o'clock the welcome resting-place was at last reached; and our worn-out pilgrims, throwing themselves down on their plaids under the shelter of those glorious trees, fell fast asleep, regardless of the absence of horses, servants, or food,—all of which were still far away in that terrible snow.

By evening, however, the stragglers came in one by one. The tents were pitched, and it was then found that the losses amounted to a little foal belonging to the Bedouin guide, and a pet hare, which had travelled on one of the baggage mules, and had been overturned and killed in the snow.

A Maronite chapel* had been erected in the centre of the grove; but it was too wet for occupation, and so the temporary altar was again erected in the tents. 'Justus ut palma florebit; sicut

* This chapel has lately been restored and fitted up by the generosity of a young English nobleman.

cedrus Libani multiplicabitur in domo Domini.' To those who have been in Syria the words of Holy Scripture come with a fourfold meaning. Our travellers spent the day in wandering among those giant trees, seven of which are unequalled in size and girth, and deserve their name—'the trees of the Lord,' so beautifully described by the prophet Ezechiel as 'with fair branches and full of leaves.' 'No tree in the Paradise of God was like Him in His beauty.' The Arabs call the cedars in their expressive language the 'friends of Solomon,' and speak of their brides, in the language of the Canticles, as the Beloved, 'whose eyes are like pools of water,' and 'whose countenance is as Lebanon—excellent as the cedars.' On the day of St. Philip and St. James, after a last mass in that beautiful spot, our travellers started for Ehden, winding round a magnificent gorge, with the village of Bischerreh, which is built on the rocky edge of the ravine, surrounded with cypresses, and the falls of Kadisha tumbling into the valley below, on their left; while on the other side of the ravine was an equally picturesque village on a shelf overhanging the precipice. The people in the Lebanon are a hardy and primitive race, but full of poetry and imagination. Their customs are peculiar, but very beautiful. When they want to express their pleasure at seeing you, in their hearty welcome they burn incense at the corners of the roads,

and pour coffee on the ground, as a kind of libation, at your feet, meaning that what they have best is not worthy of being offered to you. Our travellers were welcomed in this way all along the road to Ehden, the men firing 'feux de joie' over their heads (greatly to the disturbance of their horses), and the women burning incense and offering the most beautiful bouquets of spring flowers, violets, jasmine, primroses, and large blue forget-me-nots. For once, all offers of 'baksheesh' were refused. They escorted our travellers in this way until they arrived at the house of the Lazarist Fathers, whose convent and church are built on a raised plateau overlooking the magnificent gorge on the opposite side, and shaded by the walnut-trees for which Ehden is so famous. The superior received them very kindly, gave them coffee and sweetmeats, and showed them his church. He was daily expecting the arrival of some of the Sisters of Charity on their way to recommence the Damascene mission. Certainly the lot of these Fathers has 'fallen on pleasant places.' It is impossible to imagine a more beautiful spot, with its group of cedars, relics of the ancient forest, and the lovely range of Lebanon mountains on each side, which combine all that is grand in the way of precipices and waterfalls, with the most careful cultivation and the richest vegetation. The valley was thickly studded with little chapels and monasteries—the

chapels with open belfries or bell-turrets gladdening the hearts of our travellers, so long deprived of sights and sounds reminding them of their Faith and their home. On leaving Ehden, with its beautiful and friendly people, their route lay along the Tripoli road, till they arrived at Jebel Arneto, from whence they turned off to the left to visit the fine old Maronite convent of Mar Antoun. Passing under a high arch on which was cut a large white cross, they rode through oak and juniper woods to the convent, perched on the edge of the rock, where the monks received them courteously, and conducted the ladies to a vine-covered trellis outside the building, into which no woman is admitted.

One hundred and forty monks are congregated here; but two or three of their number have sought a more austere solitude higher up the mountain, where they pass their lives in penance and prayer. One of the party scrambled up to the cell of one of these hermits. It was bare of all furniture save a water-bottle and a large crucifix fastened into the stone. There the old man was kneeling, and with fatherly kindness rose and blessed his unexpected visitor. His only book, besides his Breviary, was a copy of St. Alphonsus Liguori; but he seemed to have no wish beyond. His food was raw herbs and rancid oil, brought up to him once or twice a week from the convent below. His sole occupation was prayer, and the endeavour to unite his soul continually

with God. It is strange in this nineteenth century of bustle and excitement, and pushing and striving, to find souls like these—as devoted, as simple, as the anchorite of old—absorbed in the unseen life; or if their thoughts turn to those they have left in the world below, only to wrestle for them in prayer with the Great Intercessor. Also, their prayers are eagerly sought for by the villagers round, whose simple faith ascribes to them a wonderful efficacy.

After refreshing themselves with excellent honey, bread, and salad, kindly provided by the hospitable monks, our travellers commenced the descent towards Tripoli, passing through a succession of beautiful villages, in which the Lazarist Fathers have everywhere established schools as at Ehden. The road was rugged and steep in the extreme, winding between two high mountains covered with the white cypress, beautiful spring flowers starting out of every fissure of the rocks. After about three hours of painful slipping and sliding, they crossed a rapid stream at the bottom, and found themselves cantering through a lovely valley on a kind of smooth sward between high hedges of pomegranate and orange and sweet-scented yellow-ochre-coloured blossoms of what the Arabs call the 'sweet olive,' but the botanical name of which our travellers in vain endeavoured to ascertain. This shrub scented the whole air for miles. Another hour's ride brought them to Zugharta, a village shaded by

mulberry and walnut trees, where they tented for the night, the Angelus-bell having first summoned them to a very tidy little church adjoining a convent-school served by the 'United' Maronites.

After early mass the following day, which was attended by a large and devout congregation, our party remounted, and, riding over a fertile plain for five or six hours, descended at last the steep hill leading to Tripoli, and tented on a small plateau overlooking the town and the sea, and close to the ruins of a picturesque castle. There are two Franciscan convents in this place, one by the seashore near the old castle built by Raymond de Toulouse; the other in the centre of the town. The Sisters of Charity are also established there, and have a flourishing orphanage and school. After spending some time with their old Franciscan friends, the travellers rode through beautiful gardens (full of oranges, apricots, and figs, and tangled over with ipomeas and other bright creepers) to the seashore, where the bright sand was covered with multitudes of shells. The ensuing day, being that kept in honour of the discovery of the Holy Cross by the Empress Helena, is a great fête throughout Palestine. The four-o'clock mass at the large Franciscan church was crowded with worshippers, and a portion of the true Cross was exposed to the veneration of the faithful. The travellers here divided; and the description of the mountain route chosen

by one half of the party is here inserted from the very interesting journal of one of the ladies :—

'May 3, Tuesday.—Tripoli.

'Our party is to divide here; some going by the sea-coast to Beyrout, while the remaining four, being bent on seeing somewhat more of the Lebanon, are to strike out a route for themselves over the mountains. Last night our mukkaree were rebellious; they disobeyed orders, and pitched our tents in the wrong place. So as we are going off on a comparatively unknown route, F. thought it advisable to give them a lesson, and proceeded to the English consul, accompanied by Mr. Jessop, the American missionary, who was most obliging, to lodge his complaints. The only punishment which the consul could inflict was to imprison the disobedient muleteers, which would effectually have put an end to our expedition; so all that could be done was to return to the camp with a kawass, who demanded sternly which were the culprits. The chief offenders being pointed out to him, he marched them off to the consul, who threatened them severely, and having frightened them out of their wits, sent them back; and ever after they were as meek and obedient as possible. Having wished the rest of our party good-bye, we got on our horses about half past ten, and, followed by our baggage mules, crossed over the bridge in the town, and took our

way over a partially cultivated plain, and then over low hills, till about the middle of the day, when we halted near a little village surrounded by gardens and orchards. In one of these we spread our carpet, and partook of our usual luncheon of cold chicken, eggs, and cake, sheltering ourselves from the sun as best we might under the scanty foliage of the olive trees. Some of us then took a nap on the ground; when you have been riding in the hot sun for some hours, there are more uncomfortable beds than a turkey carpet spread on soft ploughed land under a tree, and many a sound sleep have we had lulled perhaps by a stream, or by the drowsy singing of the grasshoppers; waking sometimes to find half the neighbouring village seated at a little distance attentively watching our slumbers with a fixed and astonished stare. On this occasion, however, we remounted our horses unwitnessed, and rode towards the village. Here we were met by a skeik, with whom Achmet-el-Feshowi, our dragoman, had some conversation. He made us profound salaams, and begged us to come and see his horses, which we accordingly did. One was a bay—a beautiful creature, somewhat larger than the usual run of Arab horses. On taking leave of us, the skeik gave me a little coarse woodcut picture of a saint, with a Maronite prayer, and, thanking him, we rode on. Reaching a high plateau, Bziza, we caused our tents to be pitched when they arrived, which they

did before we had waited for them very long. Close by was a pretty little Ionic temple with a portico, three out of the four columns still standing. Seated on some of the ruins, we waited till dinner was ready. The view was very fine; to the west we looked over hill and dale towards the sea, while to the east rose the range of mountains amongst which we were to travel the next day. As we sat there listening to Gulliver's travels, which one of our party read aloud, two mountaineers, with long carbines slung at their backs, passed by, and paused to watch us with some amusement, while we in return looked admiringly at their wild appearance and picturesque costume. During the night a very high wind sprang up, and caught our tents and battled with them, tearing open first one door and then another, till we thought we were going to be blown bodily away.

'May 4, Wednesday.

'Hitherto we had not told our mukkaree which way we were going, fearing that, not having travelled that way before, they might raise objections. Indeed, we ourselves did not know exactly where we were going, though we had a vague wish to get to Jisr-el-Hajar, a bridge we had heard of, and to arrive at Beyrout on Saturday. For the rest we looked on the map, and traced out a route which we intended following more or less as we found it

practicable. When we told the mukkaree of our plans, they were still too much subdued by their yesterday's scolding to offer one word of remonstrance. They are very good fellows after all, these muleteers, take them as a body, kind to their beasts and full of good-natured fun and jokes amongst each other. Our way at first lay up a very steep hill, on the top of which we met a goat-herd, from whom we got some milk, and then down into a valley, Farhilda, which might have been Rasselas' Happy Valley, so smiling did it look with clear streams, orchards of mulberry trees and almond trees in full blossom; and as we rode along, I amused myself by weaving a romance in which a Syrian maiden, a crusader, and the valley of Farhilda bore a prominent part; but soon the path grew too steep to admit of such conceits, and after some very stiff climbing, we were glad to pause for a few moments on some level ground, in front of a little village school shaded by trees, through the open door of which came the singsong hum of the children learning their lessons out loud; and peeping in, we saw some twenty little scholars sitting cross-legged on the ground round their master. A little farther on we reached the village of Dumah, and, while P.'s horse was being shod, we went into a shop where was displayed a quantity of English cottons and French looking-glasses. The master of the shop offered us coffee, and we sat sipping it, look-

ing into the narrow street while the people came and had a good stare at the howadjii. Proceeding on our way, we found our path grow steeper and rockier every moment. The baggage mules lagged far behind. We rested for a short time, and had luncheon among the rocks, and then resumed our climb. At last we reached the top of the pass, and found to our dismay that the road down on the other side was even more steep than the one up which we had been climbing. There was no help for it, however; so getting off our horses, and knotting up their bridles, we drove them before us and commenced our descent. The vegetation was very scanty, only a few bushes springing up between the rocks. At last we reached the bottom, and leaving our horses to the care of Achmet, we took our way on foot to the right, attracted by the sound of falling water. In a few moments we discovered whence arose the sound. Descending a steep incline, we found ourselves hemmed in on all sides by a sort of arena of rocks, which rose perhaps 100 feet all round us, enclosing an area of may be 200 square yards; the bottom was uneven, and clothed with grass and flowers, and looking up, we saw one of the most extraordinary waterfalls that probably exists. A stream running down the valley at the foot of the mountain we had just descended comes to within a couple of yards of this chasm, and there it suddenly falls through a great rent in the

rock, and makes a single unbroken leap to the ground, a distance of about 100 feet; but the strangest part of all is, that, having reached the ground, it incontinently vanishes and disappears into the earth, and is seen no more! The effect, standing below, is curious in the extreme, and is heightened by a natural bridge of rock which is thrown across from one side to the other, just in front of the waterfall and about half way down. On to this bridge we climbed, and, looking up, saw the water dashing out through the rent in the rock above us, and, looking down, saw it disappear. Whence it came, and whither it went, seemed equally inexplicable. There must have been some grand volcanic disturbance to have caused this. Returning to our horses, we found our baggage mules had not yet arrived, and after much anxious gazing up the side of the mountain, we caught sight of them creeping slowly down. When they did arrive, the muleteers were in no very pleasant humour, as not one of the mules but had had more than one tumble. However, as little damage was done beyond the breakage of sundry bottles, everything soon calmed down, and the tents were pitched in a sheltered spot which we shared with a flock of some hundred sheep and lambs herded by wild-looking shepherds, who added to the picturesqueness of the scene, when it grew dark, by setting light to some dry shrubs that grew out of the clefts of the rock.

'May 5, Thursday (Ascension Day).

'Finding a little ruined chapel not far from our encampment, we went thither and performed certain devotions in honour of the day, and then having breakfasted, we once more set off on our journeyings, having paid a last visit to our waterfall, and found it lost nothing in the morning light. A shepherd we questioned called it El Belooah. Our way now led over bleak hills, and the cold was excessive. A good deal of snow lay on the ground in places, and we found many of those beautiful fragile flowers of the crocus kind that grow near the edge of the snow. A little later, and the weather grew warmer, and the country more cheerful, till we reached Akourah, a small village at the head of a beautiful valley. Here we saw nearly the whole population at work building the priest's house; it being a festival day, they employed it in doing a good work. The valley became more beautiful every step as we descended, being clothed with trees and shrubs and beautiful flowers, while streams gushed out on all sides. We reached Afka, the source of the river Adonis in the afternoon. This was the scene of the supposed death of Adonis, who is said to have been killed by a wild boar, and a more lovely spot cannot be conceived. The river comes out of a cavern, and passes under a natural bridge of rock. The ruins of a little temple hang over a smaller

stream, and are half hidden by creepers and trees. There I spent some time in a state of dreamy enjoyment, watching the water leaping down the valley over the rocks, and listening to the birds who were singing in the woods all round, and then joined the others to investigate the source of the river. It springs out of the rock in a huge cavern, and into this cavern we were determined to penetrate; but one after the other of us struggled ineffectually to climb up a bit of perpendicular rock which barred our entrance, and we should have been obliged to give up all hope of attaining our object had not a countryman passed by, who was evidently used to the place, and who managed to climb up, greatly assisted by the fact that his feet were bare. He hauled us up one after the other, almost dislocating our arms in the process. Once in the cavern, we felt amply repaid for our exertions. It was dark and lofty, and, looking into the extreme end, we could see the whole volume of water gushing out of the rock. We stood by the side of the deep channel it had cut for itself, while the cold spray was dashed in our faces; and then turning to the mouth of the cavern, we watched it leap down, hurry under the bridge, and go foaming down the valley. Our exit was almost more difficult than our entry. As for P. and me, being the youngest and lightest of the party, our guide took us unceremoniously by the arms, and dropped us

down as he would two cats, and fortunately, like those animals, we fell safely on our legs, and watched with amusement F. and F. L. scrambling down as best they might. And now our baggage mules came by, and we felt that we must leave this beautiful place; but it was with infinite regret that we rode away, though the country we passed through was hardly less beautiful. Leaving to our right a splendid gorge that lay dark in the shadow, and that is not to be surpassed by anything in Switzerland—if indeed it is not rather infra dig. to compare the Lebanon to Switzerland—we took our way along a broad terrace nearly at the top of the range of mountains. To our right the ground fell perpendicularly for several hundred feet, and we could look sheer down into the valley beneath. The evening was now coming on, and being up so high, the cold was very great, and still the ridge stretched on before us interminably, and nobody knew how far off we were from Jisr-el-Hajar, and as our horses and selves were growing tired, we decided upon a halt, though the ground was anything but favourable. What little land was available was slightly cultivated, and wheat was beginning to show itself above ground; for the rest everything was a complete bog, with springs on all sides. However, choosing the driest place we could find —we had not the conscience to trample down the wheat—we caused our tents to be pitched. To

add to our misfortunes, we had no charcoal left, and as there was no tree in sight upon the ridge, we feared we should have to put up with a cold dinner and no means of warming ourselves, and, shivering as we were, this was no pleasant prospect. However, there was a report that not far off existed the remains of a ruined goatherd's hut, and while some of the muleteers were sent to pull down what rafters and odds and ends of wood they could find, we went to the edge of the ridge and perched ourselves upon a rock, and took a bird's-eye view of the valley beneath. Far down we could see villages, surrounded by fields and orchards, watered by pleasant streams; some men were leading the cows home to be milked, and as they called to the cattle, we could hear their voices coming faintly up to us from below. We were very hungry, but well done, Adam! despite all drawbacks, what a capital smoking hot dinner you soon set out before the weary travellers, and fortified therewith, sleep soon reigned over the encampment.

'May 6, Friday.

'Our way still lay along the ridge for some miles, but at last the ground became more broken, and we descended into a valley watered by a large stream, which turned many mills. We greeted with delight some decidedly English-looking prim-

roses, and saw rhododendrons, some of which were still in blossom. And now we parted from our baggage, and ordering the muleteers to meet us at Juneh that evening, we ascended a very stony path, and soon found ourselves at Jisr-el-Hajar. Whether from having for so long looked forward to finding ourselves there, or from having already seen natural bridges of rock, I do not know, but certain it is we did not find this bridge half so wonderful as the waterfall at El Beloûah, which to all intents and purposes we had discovered ourselves, as we never met anyone who had seen it, or found it mentioned in any guide-book. But Jisr-el-Hajar is very remarkable. It is a nearly perfect arch, spanning a broad river, which flows with extreme rapidity in a deep rocky channel. Leaving this, we rode to Fokra, where there are many grey ruins in the middle of grey rocks, and so alike in colour are the rocks and ruins that we could hardly tell them apart. Here we made a halt, and climbed about, rousing certain unpleasant-looking snakes, which on our approach uncoiled themselves and slunk under the stones. Mounting once more, we passed through the little village of Mezraah, where we had to stop while F.'s horse was being shod. This was the third time since we left Tripoli that we had to delay for the same cause, which speaks ill for the roads. All the cottages about here have on their flat roofs a smooth white stone shaped like a

garden-roller, but without a handle; for what purpose they are used, we could not ascertain, and could only guess that it was to flatten down from time to time the mud roofs. And now being somewhat weary of riding, P. and I got off our horses, and, driving them before us, descended a very good zigzag path down the side of the mountain. When we reached the bottom, we found we had considerably outstripped the others, and sat down on the bridge that spanned a very pretty stream that turned a mill-wheel close by. Here a countrywoman joined us, and we had some conversation by dumb signs; and she was much amused when I made her put on a pair of brown goggles that I had got for the sun. F. and F. L. joining us, we remounted, and rode up the other side of the mountain. The sun, which was now considerably in the west, caught our shadows from time to time, and cast them upon the mountain on the other side of the valley—the effect was curious. After a short ride, we came to a little village, and just beyond a group of rocks looking like another village, and covered with creepers and beautiful flowers which grew in the clefts. It might have been the abode of gnomes or any other 'good people.' I almost fancied I could distinguish a church with a spire, and cottages surrounded with gardens—a slight haze in the atmosphere helped the self-deception. Then we passed Kuleiat, Reifun, and Ajeltun, at which

last place we found a Maronite church open, and the congregation entering. We dismounted, and went in too, and joined in what we knew to be the service for the month of May. The people were very devout. It was a real pleasure to be among Christians, after having travelled so long as heathens. Descending once more by a steep rocky path, we passed innumerable villages, each with its church and monastery. To the west we could see the sea stretching away to the horizon. We passed Belluneh and Anturah, where there is a large Lazarist college. The ground, which was very broken about here, was covered with pine trees, and the soil was loose and sandy, and reminded us strongly of Banicle, one of the prettiest parts of Surrey. The sun had now set, and it was growing dark, and we were still some way from Juneh. We felt it was quite an open question if our tents would ever find their way across the mountains, as we had left Perini and the muleteers in a state of complete uncertainty about the road; so altogether our minds were somewhat disquieted. Passing through Zuk, we still kept descending towards the sea by a very rough path. It was now pitch dark, and we could only trust to the instinct of our tired horses. Suddenly we discovered F. was missing, and after waiting some anxious moments for him, he rejoined us, announcing that his saddle had turned completely round, and he had found himself

lying on the ground with one leg high in the air caught fast by the stirrup. Fortunately his horse, a great milk-white animal, had been far too tired to stir when he found his rider off his back. Soon we were joined by a man with a lantern, and rode through the town of Juneh, hearing the glad news that our tents had arrived, and were being pitched on the sea-shore. We were not a little relieved at the joyful intelligence, as it was now past eight, and we had been ten hours on the march, not counting stoppages. Poor P. was so exhausted, that he fell sound asleep on the ground while dinner was preparing, and could hardly be roused to eat. We were all dead tired, and should have slept soundly enough even without the lullaby of the sea, which was washing against the shore just outside the tents.

'May 7, Saturday.

'Bathing in the cool sea the next morning went far towards refreshing us. It was a splendid morning, but not one of us but felt melancholy when we thought how it was our last day of tent life, and that at the end of our day's journey a hotel awaited us! However, by this time, we had picked up enough Arabic to say "*kismet*;" so we mounted our horses, and rode on. The shore was disagreeable riding ground, being soft and yielding. We forded the Nahr-el-Kelb, and noticed with indig-

nation how the French had defaced an old Egyptian inscription on one of the rocks, and cut in deep letters, "*Armée d'Occupation*," &c.. Turning an angle of the shore, the Bay of Beyrout lay before us, and after a ride of three hours from Juneh, we found ourselves at the door of the Hôtel de l'Orient, right sorry that our pleasant journey in the Lebanon had come to an end.'

The remaining members of the party soon after started along the seashore for Batrûn, passing round a fine headland mentioned by Strabo as the 'Face of God,' and tenting near the village, which contains nothing remarkable but an old Maronite church, with one or two curious Byzantine pictures. The peasants brought some golden orioles for sale, calling them 'fig' birds, as they feed on the little insects which live on the fig-tree. The next day they were in the saddle by four o'clock, and galloped quickly across the plain to Jebeil, where they breakfasted, sitting under the vine-shaded trellis of a wayside kahn. There are very fine remains of large granite columns scattered throughout this town, which likewise contains a fine citadel and church. A six hours' ride brought them to the picturesque village situated on the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog River, a favourite summer resort of the dwellers at Beyrout. The river winds up a wild glen to a fine old Maronite convent, perched at the

top of a rock at the head of the gorge. On the opposite side of the river some very curious tablets are let into and carved in the cliffs, about the origin of which the learned are divided; but the general idea is that they are of Assyrian origin, and date from the time of Sennacherib. There are some later Latin inscriptions, to the effect that Marcus Aurelius first made the road up the glen. Our travellers dined in a pretty little kahn overlooking the rushing river and the picturesque single-arched bridge which spans it, and then remounted, and, swimming the ford, rode on by the village of Zook, where the silk and gold-threaded 'Kaffirs' are made, to Beyrout, which they reached at half past five, having been thirteen hours in the saddle.

A few days were still to elapse before our travellers were to take leave of Syria with all its cherished and hallowed associations; and these days were spent in expeditions in the neighbourhood of Beyrout, which appeared to them more lovely than ever on their return. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the beauty of this place, with its amphitheatre of mountains, its glorious pine forests, its rushing streams, its picturesque villas and convents nestling in the gorges of the hills, and its golden sands strewn with beautiful shells. It is a perfect spring residence, for when the heat becomes oppressive in the town, half an hour's ride brings you into the delicious bracing air of the Lebanon

ranges, where one villa after the other tempts you to prolong your stay, and each ravine seems more lovely than the other. The first ride taken by our party was to the convent of Mar Ronkas, through the beautiful pine forest, and by an oleander-fringed stream, and then scrambling up a path more fit for goats than horses, with no other misadventure than the occasional bursting of a saddle girth from the frantic efforts of the poor beasts to keep their footing in these so-called roads. The good old monks let the lower floor of their convent, and seemed diappointed that their visitors only came for a few hours and from pure curiosity; but they brought cakes and deliciously cool lemonade, and did their utmost to show hospitality to their unexpected guests.

From thence, through a myrtle-scented thicket, they rode to *Der-el-Kulah*, a Maronite convent, situated in the very heart of the mountains, from whence there is the most glorious view imaginable. Their riches consist in silkworms, and a whole forest of mulberry trees gave a grateful shade to the passer-by. There are some extensive ruins close to the convent, said to be the remains of a temple of Baal, and also a fine early Christian church. Leaving Der-el-Kulah, our party rode through a rugged precipitous path (only dignified by that name from having sundry smooth slabs of stone, at an angle of forty-five degrees, thrown across

the track here and there) to the village of Beit Miry, where the whole population seemed absorbed in one thing, the rearing and caring for silkworms. Cocoons in trays, and heaps of rough or smooth white and yellow silk, were in every door and window, and their year seemed divided into seasons solely by the age of the caterpillars! This place suffered terribly in the late massacres, and many of the summer villas, which were the favourite resort of the Beyrout merchants and their families, are now but a heap of ruins. It is impossible to conceive the loveliness of the view from hence: the whole of Beyrout is stretched out at one's feet, with the bright blue sea beyond. A magnificent pine forest fills up the ravine to the left; while to the right a grand grey crag rises perpendicularly above one's head, and the snow-capped peak of 'Sunnin' towers above the whole. One of the party declared, 'It was like the drop scene at the opera.' Certainly, in nature, it is rare to meet with such a combination of beautiful features in any one landscape. It was like the fairest Italian picture; and the luxuriance of the flowers which carpeted the whole ground, oleanders, cistus (white and lilac), roses, maiden-hair fern, and every variety of honeysuckle, clematis, and creeping plants, added to the charm of the whole. The Maronite peasantry contribute to the picturesqueness of the scene; both men and women are a magnificently-formed race, and the dress

of the women, consisting generally of a scarlet or blue petticoat, a muslin bodice or stomacher, a gaily-woven sash, and a beautifully-embroidered muslin veil, with strings of gold coins round the neck, adds very much to their natural beauty. Their head-dress is also peculiar and becoming, consisting of the tarboosh, edged with coins, and the 'saffah,' or black silk nets, into which is worked a multitude of tiny oblong bits of gold. All these are heirlooms, and form part of the 'dot' of a bride, so that they will never part with them to a stranger. A pomegranate blossom, or a bunch of orange flowers, stuck just above the ear, generally completes their toilet. The Druze women are dressed more like the Egyptian, with the exception of the silver horn on the forehead, worn only by the married ones; but they seem to be going out of fashion, for only two or three were met with by our travellers. Above the village are extensive vineyards, producing a delicious luscious grape, of which the sweet wine is made so liked by all the dwellers on the coast. Altogether, Beit Miry is a perfect earthly paradise, and were peace and security once more to be guaranteed to its inhabitants, its capabilities of improvement and the richness of the soil would make it unequalled in all the world for beauty and fertility.

The next morning, the ladies of the party, being somewhat exhausted with the excessive roughness of the previous day's ride, contented themselves

'with exploring the town, and went to visit the Kaiserswerth Deaconesses, who have a very fine establishment at Beyrout, with a large orphanage, and a boarding-school for children of the middle classes, managed by thirteen sisters, including a gentle and pleasing-looking superior. The whole was scrupulously clean and nice, but to eyes accustomed to the orphanage of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, there was a coldness and an absence of cheerful pictures and other things about the house which struck them as chilling in the extreme. In the afternoon, two of the party tried to take a drive with an invalid friend in the one carriage to be hired at Beyrout; at the preparation of which, the whole street turned out with the curiosity which some of us may remember in England at the first appearance of a locomotive. But the drive was a failure; for with every good will on the part of the driver and the occupiers of the Noah's Ark in question, the quadrupeds who were to drag them were of a different mind; and, after being alternately coaxed and beaten into going in an erratic fashion, through part of the pine-wood forest to a certain café, where, it is to be supposed, they had, on previous occasions, found 'good accommodation for man and horse,' as was announced in three languages on the doorway, they utterly and entirely refused to proceed a step further, and all the efforts on the part of the driver,

assisted by the passers-by, having only resulted in the horses backing the machine into a ditch, the ladies were compelled to get out and walk home. Humility and obedience are qualities which the Hadites * of the Koran does not include in its enumeration of the virtues of their Arab steeds.

In the evening, the ladies found themselves invited to visit the harem of the Pasha, who now occupy the house inhabited by Lord Dufferin during his Beyrout and Lebanon mission. But the harems of Cairo and Damascus had spoiled our party for anything less sumptuous; and though the flowers were lovely, and the sweetmeats flavoured with the finest attar of roses, still the ladies themselves were neither well dressed, nor, with one exception, beautiful. The same ceremonies were gone through as before; the same endless succession of coffee, sweetmeats, and long pipes, and then the English ladies took their leave; and thus ended their last evening in this the most delightful of all residences on the Syrian coast.

* The 'Hadites,' or 'Conversations of Mahomet,' are a sort of supplement or apocryphal addition to the Koran, and are full of curious legends and wise sayings attributed to the Prophet.

CHAPTER XI.

ASIA MINOR AND EPHESUS.

A BEAUTIFUL boat, a kind and obliging captain, and agreeable companions, could hardly reconcile our travellers to the terrible sorrow of leaving Syria, and all those whom they had learned to love and know so well during the four months which the constant intimate intercourse of camp life had made appear almost as many years!

The vessel was French—one of the 'Messageries Impériales'—with a capital saloon on deck, and a poop above, from which they sadly and tearfully watched the receding minarets and houses of Beyrout; which, by the clear moon, and with the flickering lights in the water, appeared even more beautiful than by day.

The following morning found them at Tripoli; but knowing the place already, only one or two of the party landed and paid a flying visit to one of the convents of the Franciscan Fathers on the shore, who gave them mass. The weather was glorious, and at two o'clock in the afternoon, the 'Carmel' anchored at 'Latakieh.' This pretty bright little

town stands on a rocky promontory overlooking the sea, with a picturesque range of snowy mountains at the back. It is a thriving place, with orange and citron groves, and exports great quantities of the tobacco which bears its name, and which is much esteemed throughout the Levant. The harbour is good, with a Saracenic tower guarding one entrance, and a ledge of rocks the other. Landing at the massive pier, which rests on granite columns, our travellers explored the town, which, it is fair to say, is more beautiful when seen at a distance than walking through its dirty streets, especially on a very hot day, when the aroma of dead dogs was anything but inviting! At the further end of the place is a curious triumphal arch of Roman work, together with a quantity of granite columns. Everywhere, in fact, there are fragments of fine buildings, Corinthian pillars, and the like; but wearied with the sun, our party turned gladly into the cool parlour of the Franciscan Fathers, who received them, as usual, with the greatest kindness and hospitality. Latakia, the ancient Laodicea, and once the seat of an important bishopric, has now dwindled down to a miserably small Christian population. But they have lately built a nice little church, and with the wholesome terror now inspired in the Turkish mind by the signal punishment awarded to the perpetrators of the Lebanon massacres, it is to be hoped that the good fathers

may be allowed to prosecute their missionary labours in peace. But the great object of landing at Latakieh is to make a pilgrimage to Antioch, that city so famous in Holy Writ; and to which there is, from hence, a good and direct road. Only two of the party, however, had the courage or the time to make the attempt; and the following is an extract from the journal of one of them:—

'Avoiding the more picturesque mountain path, which at that time was considered unsafe from the irruption of hostile tribes, we wound along the coast so as to visit Seleucia on the way. There is nothing very picturesque in the scenery till you come to the base of "*Casius*," a great limestone mountain rising abruptly from the sea, and immortalised by Pliny. Its base is feathered by a beautiful forest of oak and pine, and an underwood of ilex, myrtle, pomegranate, and other flowering shrubs. Crossing the mouth of the Orontes, by a very tolerable ford, in which our horses kept their footing without swimming, we suddenly came upon what appeared a little earthly paradise. This was the home of the late Mr. Barker, once English consul in Egypt, who cultivated and planted the whole plain, building a beautiful villa in the centre, which still remains; as if to prove what might be done with the soil and climate if Asia Minor were in other hands. The mulberry, vine, orange, and citron grow in the greatest luxuriance, with a

multitude of beautiful wild flowers; and the finest crops of wheat we had seen in the East. The road from hence winds through a forest of oleanders (pink, white, and lilac) to Seleucia, behind which rises the jagged hill of "*Jebel Musa*," the sides of which are perforated with rock tombs; but the most interesting thing connected with it is a tunnel of magnificent Roman masonry, supposed to have been used for diverting the water, which would naturally flow from the mountains after the great snows, so as to prevent the flooding of the town. The entrance to the harbour is of solid masonry, with the ruins of a tower on each side. But the Christian reminiscences of the place must ever give it an interest, for here St. Paul and St. Barnabas first started on their apostolic commission. All vestiges of its past glories have now disappeared, and Seleucia is utterly desolate. A couple of miles farther on is a Moslem chapel dedicated to St. George. With that curious traditional belief in Christianity and Christian saints which is always taking one by surprise in Mohametan countries, we were told that not only the Turkish sailors, but the agricultural labourers, never either start on their voyages or sow their crops without invoking his protection; and on their safe return and at harvest time they equally congregate here to offer up their thanksgivings at his shrine. The patron saint of England is a universal favourite throughout the East, and

every denomination of worshippers has erected a temple in his honour.

'A bridle-path winds round the mountain and across a ferry from hence to "Beit-el-Ma," the ancient 'Daphne,' the position of which strongly resembles Tivoli; only that in place of temples, there are now flour mills! Here St. Babylus was martyred, and a beautiful church was erected on the spot, of which, however, not a stone now remains.

'The view of Antioch which bursts upon one on leaving Beit-el-Ma is perfectly beautiful. The plain of the Orontes is, as it were, hemmed in by rugged mountains, and the ruins of extensive fortifications, with corner towers and crenelated walls, built in zigzags down to the river, together with the white houses and graceful minarets interspersed with palm trees and luxuriant gardens, form altogether the most lovely picture it is possible to conceive. A steep stony path leads into the town; but once arrived there, we are bound to say that the beautiful illusion vanishes. Nothing but dirt and squalid misery appear on every side; though the grand old walls reaching up to "Mount Silpius," and a few towers, some of which seem suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth, remain to testify to a portion of its ancient grandeur. Of the Christian memorials, this, the nursery of the Infant Church, where the name was first given which it is now our glory to bear; this, the

site of the bishopric of the holy and venerable St. Ignatius, who was torn from hence to feed the wild beasts in the Coliseum; this, the birthplace of St. Chrysostom, the Golden-mouthed Doctor—nothing remains save the ruins of one church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and another to St. John, near the iron gate, which has been lately purchased by the French. This church is excavated out of the very rock itself, and by the altar is an ancient well; a rough kind of fresco remains on the walls, but that must have been added in later times. There is a fine gateway with a single arch on the road towards Aleppo, called "Bab Bulus," or the Gate of Paul, with a magnificent lime-tree, under which a group of Aleppo merchants were resting; and this is all that remains of a town which for many centuries bore the name of "*the third city in the world.*"'

Returning to Latakieh, two of the party proceeded to Laneka, on the south coast of Cyprus—a route not followed by the 'Carmel,' which contained the ladies, who were, therefore, obliged to content themselves with the coast line.

One of the gentlemen wrote, in speaking of this expedition—'We were all dreadfully disappointed with the far-famed beauties of this island. We called on the Consul, who told us a good deal about the state of the country, and also regaled us with the most delicious Cyprian wine, which is quite

different from the ordinary stuff called by that name which one gets on board the steamers or in the convents. He told us that the northern part of the island was far more beautiful and interesting than the southern, and that the land is extremely fertile, producing every species of vegetable and fruit. Laneka, though by no means a large place, is the chief town of the island, and has a tolerable export trade. We walked for some time about the town, but found little to interest us, except the Franciscan church, which, though not very architectural, is spacious, and elaborately decorated. The mission is in a flourishing condition, and the number of Christians is very considerable. The country in the immediate neighbourhood looks very dreary, and is, we were told, marshy and pestilential; but at the distance of a few miles inland we could see a grand range of high mountains, which are said to abound in game. Notwithstanding its many historical associations—for this town occupies the site of the ancient *Citium*, the birthplace of Zeno, and the scene of the death of Cimon, son of Miltiades—we left Laneka without any regret.'

The 'Carmel' continuing on her course, reached Alexandretta (Iskanderun) by peep of day, and the greater portion of her passengers went on shore at once. The remains of a fine old Roman road connects Antioch and Iskanderun, skirting Bahr-el-Abyad, or the 'White Lake,' and winding through

a pass cut in the rock, with the remains of an ancient and massive gateway at one end. A modern writer says, 'It was by this pass (called "the Syrian Gate") that Alexander the Great entered Syria after the defeat of Darius in the plains of Issus below. It was along this road that Barnabas went from Antioch to Tarsus "to seek Saul." And here again the Crusaders defiled after their weary march through Asia Minor. Along it now, day by day, picturesque caravans pass and repass between Aleppo and Iskanderun.'

The fact of its being a station for the French mail steamers has given a sort of importance to this miserable little collection of huts, situated in a marshy plain at the foot of the mountains, which form a fine bold range at the back, but which are almost unexplorable from the bad and savage character of the people. Iskanderun is horribly unhealthy, and none remain there save the consular agents and the Franciscan Fathers, who ever 'hold their lives in their hands,' as it were, for the love of God and their neighbour. The people here are surly, treacherous, and dangerous. Some of the party went out in a little boat (whilst the steamer was coaling) to see something of the coast. All of a sudden the men laid down their oars, and flatly refused to return to the ship, unless on payment of an enormous 'baksheesh.' The situation was perilous; little creeks abounded, into which, with the greatest ease, these men might have run the

boat, murdered their passengers, and gone off to the mountains with the spoil, safe from any possibility of pursuit or fear of justice. Luckily, the only gentleman of the party had plenty of pluck and courage, and instantly alive to the critical nature of the position, he ordered the men, in a voice of thunder, to pull back to the steamer directly, at peril of their lives, displaying at the same time his revolver. His imperative voice and manner TOLD, as it always does with Orientals, who look upon gentleness and courtesy as a sign of fear; and the sailors, dropping the insolent tone they had adopted a few minutes before, surlily resumed their oars and obeyed. What horror would have happened had the ladies been alone with that villain-faced crew it is impossible to tell; but it cured them for the future of any wish to repeat the experiment without a sufficient male escort.

The next morning they arrived at Mersina, where there is again a Franciscan mission, church, and convent. This place is in Cilicia, and about three days' journey from Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul; but want of time prevented any of the party from making this expedition. The range of the Taurus mountains here is very fine, and runs parallel to the sea along the south-west corner of Asia Minor. The peaks, still covered with snow, were dazzlingly beautiful in the rays of the sun. The fine ruins of *Soli* (now called Mezetlu) are about

five miles from the town, and well worth the ride. It was formerly an important city, with a fine port and harbour, built by Pompey; but now nothing remains save twenty or thirty columns with Greek capitals, forming part of a colonnade leading to a theatre of white marble, which is almost entirely buried in the sand. There are no inhabitants whatever in this place. The ruins crop out here and there amidst a wild underwood of orange, mastic, myrtle, and other shrubs.

The following day the 'Carmel' cast anchor in the harbour of Rhodes, at four o'clock in the morning; and the travellers hastily dressing, got into a little boat and rowed to shore. It is a beautiful island of a triangular shape, richly wooded, with the fine snowy peak of Mount Artamira rising up in the centre, and adding to the picturesque character of the whole. Landing on the sandy shore of a little bay to the left of the town, the party proceeded to walk up to the city gates; but found them closed till six o'clock. No Christian is allowed to sleep within the walls, or to enter the city on Friday after eleven o'clock, as there is a prophecy, firmly believed in by the Moslems, that the Christians are to retake the town on that day. Finding they had, therefore, an hour to wait, our travellers went to the English and French consuls, and from thence to a new church and convent lately built outside the walls by the Franciscans, where, to their

great pleasure, they found an early mass. In this church is a very remarkable painting on marble of the Madonna, with the arms of Aubusson (one of the later Grand Masters) in a corner on the right-hand side. When the Turks took the town, after its heroic defence by the knights under Villiers de l'Isle d'Adam, a Christian slave concealed this picture under the earth-flooring of his house, where it was discovered, in 1630, by the Greeks. Through all the ruin and spoliation of centuries it has been safely preserved, and is as fresh as when first executed. Six o'clock having struck, the party returned to the gates, and this time were admitted by a somewhat surly Turkish official, who, having reluctantly performed this evidently distasteful duty, utterly declined to assist them in any way to find their road to that main object of attraction in Rhodes, the 'Street of the Knights.' However, following the line of the battlements, they soon came upon the great 'hospital' or convent, now converted into a barrack, which a good-natured officer volunteered to show them. It is a square building, on one side of which is a beautiful hall (formerly the refectory), with a ceiling of cedar or cypress wood, and on the other a gigantic kitchen, with large offices adjoining, all bearing traces of former Christian occupation. Leaving the hospital, our travellers toiled up the famous and beautiful street, with its grand old houses, each with its massive doorway

and carved escutcheon, by which one can still recognise the arms of the families to whom the valiant knights belonged. The 'Fleur de Lis' and 'The Three Lions,' side by side, point to the time when, as now, England and France were united in defence of Christianity against Moslem tyranny. The English shield, with the arms of Peter d'Aubusson, the Grand Master, comes first; then the Italian, with the escutcheon of Fabrice de Carretto; then the French, with the motto over the cable-moulded door of:

De France. Le Grand Prieur. F. Emery de Amboise. 1492.

On the shields are the cross of the order and the arms of Amboise and of L'Isle d'Adam, with the royal arms of France in 1495, and the inscriptions, 'Voluntas Dei,' and 'Dieu aide le Pèlerin.' A little farther on is the 'Chapelle de France,' with the arms of the Holy Land, *i.e.*, the 'Five Crosses.' Then come those of Spain and Portugal, and between these nations are shields bearing the arms of different old families, among which several of the party gladly recognised their own. At the top of the hill is the palace of the Grand Master; but like the glorious church of St. John, which it adjoins, nothing now remains but ruins, the whole having been destroyed in the terrible explosion of 1856. The reason of the surrender of Rhodes to the Turks was the want of ammunition, and for this supposed neglect a noble life was sacrificed. Yet his assertions, then un-

believed, were verified after the lapse of centuries by a mass of gunpowder having been discovered in vaults, unknown or forgotten, under the church, by the accidental ignition of which this terrible and irreparable ruin was effected. Only a half-fallen arch, a few marble pillars, and some carved capitals testify to the beauty of this once venerable cathedral; and out of its scattered stones the Pasha is now building himself a palace, regardless of the Christian emblems with which they are engraven.

It was in 1306, after their defeat at St. Jean d'Acre, that the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire made a grant of this island to the Knights of St. John, who, under their Grand Master, Foulques de Villaret, conquered and took possession of it. In spite of continued assaults from the Turks, they maintained their ground till 1523, when Solyman the Magnificent invested it on all sides, and after one of the most glorious sieges on record they were compelled to capitulate, but retired with all the honours of war, and took refuge first in Candia, but finally in Malta, which was given to them by Charles V.

From the 'Street of the Knights' our travellers went down to see the harbour and fortifications, which remain as a lasting monument of the labour and skill of this noble band of men, whose shields and armorial bearings are carved under little covered canopies, at certain intervals, all along the walls.

The entrance to the harbour is defended by two square towers, dedicated to St. John and St. Michael; but they suffered much last year from an earthquake, which did a great deal of damage to the whole town. The view of the island from the ramparts is beautiful. Judas trees in full blossom, planes giving a grateful shade, and palms 'cutting the sky line,' as painters say, with their graceful foliage, and throwing flickering shadows on the slender minarets and glistening domes of the town, made a beautiful foreground; while the picturesque coast of Anatolia, with its snowy range beyond, and the varied outline of the shore, completed the picture. Near St. Catherine's Gate is a square tower, containing a chapel dedicated to St. George, with a fresco of the saint; but some suppose it to refer to the gallant knight 'Deodato de Gozon,' who, in defiance of the orders of the Grand Master, went out to fight and destroy a crocodile which was ravaging the shores. In spite of the delight and gratitude of the inhabitants, who were thereby delivered from their enemy, the young knight was publicly degraded and stripped of his habit for his disobedience, though afterwards reinstated. Our travellers in vain tried to find his tomb, on which was the inscription 'Ci gît le Vainqueur du Dragon;' but they discovered a little marble tablet in the bastion of Auvergne, which records the story. Near this tower of St. George,

Count Macdonnell discovered another tablet, built into the wall, to the memory of an English Knight of the Order of St. John, of which the inscription is as follows :—

Hic jacet
Thomas Newportus
Angliæ Miles, qui obiit
1502, xxii mensis Sep-
tembris, cujus anima
proptietur Deus.
Amen. 1505.

Underneath is a coat of arms with the paternal and maternal arms impaled; and below, a skull and bones.

In all directions shot and shell were lying about, and old guns of various kinds, some of them beautifully decorated, so that it was difficult to imagine that the siege was not a thing of yesterday.

From the ramparts, our party went into the bazaars, which are, however, poor enough, the only thing to be bought being sponges, and even for them an exorbitant price was asked. Whilst they were poking about among the stalls of the itinerant vendors of Eastern commodities, a poor Carmelite Father came to claim their kind interference on his behalf, he having been told that the captain of the 'Carmel' would strongly object to receiving him on board his boat, a monk being invariably considered 'unlucky' by the sailors; and yet it was of the utmost importance that the poor fellow should proceed at once to Smyrna on urgent

family matters. This idea reminded one of the party of the speech of an Ennis Quaker some years before in County Galway, who, describing his immunity from outrage at the hands of the Irish peasantry (then justly incensed against their Saxon landlords), said: 'O! they won't hurt *me*, because they consider it "unlucky" to shoot a Quaker—it's like shooting a Robin Redbreast!' In this case, the captain having been persuaded to waive his prejudice and disregard the 'unluckiness' of his would-be passenger, the poor Carmelite came on board, and the steamer soon after got under weigh and steamed out of harbour and through the beautiful chain of islands in the Egean Sea. One only thing at Rhodes had been unvisited by our travellers for lack of time; and that was, the curious collection of antiquities lately discovered by M. Biliotti, the son of the English Vice-Consul at Scio, which Miss Beaufort has described in the second volume of her charming book on 'Syrian Shrines' (that most agreeable guide to travellers in Palestine), and which she characterises as the result of excavations in 'an entire necropolis of the time of the Phœnician Greeks.'

'The "Carmel" kept on her westerly course as far as Iclos, and still continued to hug the coast of Asia Minor, passing close to Cape Krio, the point of the long peninsula which here juts out into the sea. The walls and ruins of the

ancient *Cnidus*, which occupied this position, were distinctly visible, and give evidence of a large city having once existed on this spot. But immediately above the plateau on which the ruins stand, rises the sheer, bleak mountain range, which seems to shut out all view of the interior from the dwellers on the coast. It was off this cape that Conon gained his well-known victory over the Lacedemonians.

'From Cape Krio the steamer struck across the mouth of the bay to Boudrun, a cheerful-looking, bright little town, with the remains of fine fortifications, formerly belonging to the Knights Hospitallers. It is the representative of the ancient Halicarnassus. Thence the "Carmel" threaded her way through a multitude of islands, passing close to Cos and Calymnos, and getting a glimpse just before sunset of the mountainous peaks of Patmos, the place of exile of St. John. On the island of Cos were seen the remains of an old castle, also the work of the Knights; and at Patmos, a telescope enabled our travellers to fancy they detected the walls of the Acropolis, which still exists on the top of the hill above the town. There is a most interesting convent in this island; but the steamer could not stop for any of the party to land and visit it. The prosperity of Calymnos depends on its sponge fishery, which employs the whole population, and is very lucrative. Later in

the evening the pilot from the poop of the steamer pointed out Samos and Nikania; after which her course was directed into comparatively open sea for the night, the following morning finding her under the lee of Chios. The grand, picturesque beauty of this whole mountainous coast was very striking; and also the great desolation which pervades the country, whether on the islands or the mainland; but still more remarkably in islands once so teeming with Greek colonists, and such great emporiums of trade. Cos certainly looked green and fertile, and tolerably cultivated, while at the northern extremity of the island there is an apparently large and well-built town. But otherwise, with the exception of Boudrun, not a village nor scarcely an inhabitant is to be seen. The complete dying-out of the Turkish race inhabiting Asia Minor, whether caused by the rapacity of the Pashas or from some hitherto unexplained cause, is a fact which is occupying the attention of the most earnest thinkers in Constantinople and elsewhere at this moment. Whole tracts of country, formerly gardens of fertility, are now lying fallow and utterly neglected for want of hands. Soon the long coast of Lesbos (or Mitylene), as it is now called, came in sight, bounding the horizon to the north; and then the "Carmel" took a sudden turn eastward, and steamed into the glorious Bay of Smyrna. This bay is more than thirty

miles in length; the shores are beautiful—villas and little villages nestle among the hills, or close to the water's edge, with cypresses and palms and groups of fir-trees—while at the back of the town stretches a fine mountainous range, on the summit of one of which stand the remains of an old and picturesque castle. It was almost like the first sight of Beyrout; with the only drawback that here, for the first time, for nearly eight months, our travellers detected roofs to the houses; a sorrowful proof, if any were needed, of their approaching return to European habits and customs. Here they were to take leave of their delightful ship and courteous captain, as the "Carmel" was bound for Athens, and they for Constantinople. While the negotiations were pending between their courier and the captain of a smaller vessel, whose destination was for the Turkish capital, our travellers landed, and escaping the custom-house by a judicious "baksheesh," made their way to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where they secured rooms for the two nights of their stay. This done, they proceeded, in spite of the intense heat, to explore the town. The Frank quarter is rather Italian than Oriental; but the Turkish bazaars greatly resemble those of Cairo. The population of Smyrna, which is about 150,000, is composed of all nations, Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Italians, French, English, and others. There are a great number of English merchants,

who form, apparently, a very flourishing body. The Levantines, who are spread throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, but who live specially at Smyrna, are a peculiar race of people, partly descended from the ancient inhabitants of Asia Minor, and partly Greek with an Italian element. They speak the Greek language, and for the most part wear the European costume. They have for centuries been the chief traders in this part of the world, though some of them are in poor circumstances. They are almost all wonderfully handsome, especially the women and children, and have a type of native beauty rarely to be found except in those who have gentle blood in their veins. Having made sundry purchases in the bazaars, our travellers went to see the Latin and Greek churches, and to the Convent of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. Unfortunately, Monsignor Spaccapietra, the venerable Catholic Archbishop of Smyrna, to whom they had letters of introduction, was absent at the time; and when they arrived at the Home of the Sisters of Charity, they found that the superior and most of the community had taken their orphans that day for a holiday to Ephesus, so that the house was comparatively empty. But the sisters who had stayed at home were most kind and loving, showing them all over the orphanage, and insisting upon their coming to rest in their deliciously cool parlour, and giving them some of those

refreshing drinks, called in Italy 'una bibita,' which are nowhere so well understood as in those hot countries. When the sun's heat diminished a little in intensity, our party started for the Castle Hill, to see that which is the chief object of interest in Smyrna, the site of St. Polycarp's martyrdom. Fragments of old walls, with a few relics of the Temple of Jupiter, are all that remain of the ancient city; but the form of the amphitheatre is still clearly visible, and it was with no common feelings that they walked across the arena, still partially enclosed by broken seats, and then came to the spot which tradition points out as the site of the glorious triumph of the martyr. When Philip the Asiarch was petitioned by the people to let loose a lion upon St. Polycarp, he told them that it was out of his power, as those shows were closed. They then unanimously demanded that he should be burnt alive. Their request was no sooner granted than every one ran with speed to fetch all available wood from the baths and shops, and heaped it round the martyr, whom they would have nailed to the stake, but for his beautiful words, 'Suffer me to be as I am. He who gives me grace to bear the fire will enable me to stand still without that precaution.' Fire was set to the pile, which burst into a mighty flame; but instead of consuming the body of the martyr, the flames formed themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship swelled with the wind, gently encir-

cling, without hurting, their intended victim; and, the infidels, enraged at the miracle which baffled their fury, thrust him through and through with their spears.* In the *enceinte* of the old castle is a ruined mosque, built on the site and from the materials of what is said to have been the church built over his tomb, which is pointed out with the greatest veneration by both Moslems and Christians. Returning home by moonlight, they passed through the Turkish burial-ground, which is of immense extent, as no grave is ever opened a second time. It is in the midst of a grove of gigantic cypresses, like that of Scutari, and the effect is sombre and beautiful in the extreme.

The following day was spent in an expedition to

* St. Polycarp, the friend and companion of St. John the Evangelist, was the angel or bishop of the Church of Smyrna, a Church commended above all others by Christ Himself in the Apocalypse, as the only one of the seven without reproach. He governed that see for seventy years, and was said to be 120 years old at the time of his martyrdom. His prayer while standing on his funeral pile is too beautiful not to be inserted here:—

'O Almighty Lord God, Father of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, God of angels, powers, and every creature, and of all the race of the just who live in Thy presence, I bless Thee for having been pleased in Thy goodness to bring me to this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs, and partake of the Chalice of Thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life in the incorruptibleness of Thy Holy Spirit; amongst whom grant me to be received this day as a pleasing sacrifice, such a one as Thou Thyself hast prepared, that so Thou mayest accomplish in me what Thou, O true and faithful God, hast foreknown. Wherefore, for all things I praise, bless, and glorify Thee, through the Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son, with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Ghost be glory, now and for ever and ever. Amen.'

the ruins of Ephesus. Our travellers were lucky enough to find a special train engaged by a party of Smyrna merchants for the day, who very good-naturedly allowed them to put on another carriage to theirs. This, the first railroad in Turkey, was completed about two years ago by an English company, and is entirely under English superintendence. It was hoped thereby to open up the trade with the interior. But the peasants seem to have both a fear and a jealousy of this new sort of transport, and most of the produce of the interior still finds its way to Smyrna on the backs of mules or camels. The train started at 9·30, and the journey to Ephesus took about an hour and a half. It is forty-eight miles; but being a special train, there was, of course, no delay on the road. The line runs through a long and fertile valley, or rather plain, backed by high and rugged hills, which reminded one of Savoy. To the east, several distant snow-capped mountains came in sight, and the whole scenery was quite lovely. Every member of the party was in raptures with the specimen afforded them of the natural beauties of Asia Minor, a country so little known to English people in general, and so well deserving a better acquaintance. Arrived at Ephesus, a fresh surprise awaited them. The native village of Aya-silook (a corruption of the Greek word signifying a *church*), and which has become the principal railway station, is certainly small, dirty, and by no

means remarkable. But the whole surface of the ancient city, occupying a space of perhaps three miles square, is stretched out as on a map at your feet, and is literally covered with ruins, fragments of temples, amphitheatres, public baths, and other gigantic buildings. The first real excavations are now being made for the British Museum; and some bold antiquarians pretend to identify every portion as this or that temple, theatre, library, bath-house, and so on. But one site is indubitable, and that is the site of the great Theatre of Diana, built on the side of a hill, which forms a beautiful background, and facing the sea. There are a vast number of prostrate columns in all directions, and in many places the ground is literally a mass of fragments of marble, granite, and masonry. The ruins represent buildings of all ages, from 1,000 years before the Christian era to the time of the Saracenic Sultans. Hardly any city in the world, save Rome, combines so many Pagan with so many Christian associations. The circus or stadium is almost perfect, and is between 600 and 700 feet long. Here one could almost see St. Paul amid the stormy throng of the theatre. Here also St. Timothy was first bishop, that favourite son of the great Apostle of the Gentiles; and here St. John, the Beloved Disciple, with the Blessed Mother of God, ended their days in love and peace. A ruined mosque near the village occupies the site of an ancient

church which was built over the great Apostle's tomb. Now, the silence and desolation are unbroken. The chosen Church 'left her first charity.' She refused to 'do penance;' and so God's unfailing word pronounced her doom, and her 'Candlestick' was 'removed out of its place.' A shepherd leading his flocks, who followed his voice, to browse the scanty herbage among the pillars, was the only living thing amid those wonderful remains of departed grandeur and holy associations!

The ruins are now about three miles from the sea; but it seems that formerly the city was on the coast, and the land which now intervenes is an alluvial soil formed by the deposit of the River Cayster during the last 2,000 years.

One day was scarcely enough for sketching and exploring this most interesting place, though the managers of the railway had obligingly provided horses for the accommodation of the travellers; and it was with real regret that they found the time was come when the train was to start on its way back to Smyrna. They reached their hotel at nine o'clock, after twelve hours of intense pleasure, leaving life-long recollections. One of the party who had visited Smyrna some years before, said that, at that time, it was quite unsafe to go half a mile beyond the city; and that the Kurds had been known to dash into the town and carry off a merchant from his desk in his very counting-house for

the sake of ransom. Now, though there are still some wild and migratory tribes in the neighbourhood, the whole of the country between Smyrna and Ephesus is opened to European improvement, and no injury has ever been attempted to either the railroad or the passengers.

The following day our travellers embarked on board their new boat, the 'Taurus,' a miserably small and crowded steamer, in which some of the party could only obtain berths by the kindness of the ship's officers in the one case, and the good-nature of the passengers in the other. Though the passages had been taken weeks beforehand from Beyrout to Constantinople, and the Company were consequently bound to send them on, no proper arrangement had been entered into with the corresponding Smyrna steamer, which had filled its cabins with local passengers, including the wife and family of the Anglican Bishop of ——; who had been exercising his episcopal functions at Smyrna, and was now bound for the Turkish capital, hoping thereby to assist in the much-desired movement of union with the Greek Church, and communion with the Greek patriarch in that city—a hope, however, which was destined to be frustrated. The last few hours of their stay at Smyrna were spent in making various purchases and drinking coffee and sherbet at the famous coffee house, near the Caravan Bridge, over which strings of camels are seen wend-

ing their way slowly from all parts of Asia Minor into the town, laden with their fruity burden, which is afterwards deposited in the courtyards of the merchants' houses, where multitudes of women and children are at work all day long, picking and preparing the oranges and figs for instant exportation.

After leaving Smyrna the weather suddenly changed, and though the steamer touched at Castro, the ancient Mitylene (in Lesbos), it was with great difficulty that the mails could be landed at Tenedos. No anchor could be got to hold, and the captain was forced to let her drive about outside the port for some time, while the little mail boat was landing. Opposite Tenedos is the site of Troy; and had the gale been less heavy, it would have been a great pleasure to land, or even to think that one was actually coasting along the Troad, so famous in classical lore. Some little way before arriving at this point, the cliffs on the mainland suddenly cease, and the coast becomes flat and low.

Before the evening was over, the steamer entered the long narrow Straits of the Dardanelles, passing through Sestos and Abydos. The entrance to the Straits is very fine, with castles on either side; and, indeed, the shores the whole way along are strongly fortified, and cannon-mouths peep through the loop-holes of all the battlements. By the Treaty of Paris, no foreign vessel of war above a certain tonnage is allowed to enter the Dar-

danelles without a special firman from the Sultan. About mid-day the steamers stopped for a short time at the somewhat miserable town of Dardanelles, on the Asiatic side of the Straits, and then pursued her course through ever-increasing wind and rain to Gallipoli, on the European side, near the entrance of the Sea of Marmora. Here the captain in vain endeavoured to continue his voyage. The gale increased in severity, and after two or three futile attempts, he was compelled to put back, lay-to, and wait till the next day. The passengers endeavoured to make up for their disappointment by different games, which increasing sea-sickness and misery soon made impossible. For twenty-four hours the steamer rocked hopelessly up and down; and those whom the over-crowded state of the boat had deprived of a cabin sat miserable and soaked through, sheltering themselves as best they might in the ship's tarpauling. At last the storm abated a little, and they were able to continue their voyage through the Sea of Marmora, which was, however, too rough to be at all pleasant. The captain told them that the night before no boat could have lived in that sea, especially a small one, like the 'Taurus,' which was only meant for calm, coasting voyages. Fortunately, the next morning the sky cleared; the sun came out, and the glorious approach to Constantinople was made under the most favourable auspices.

The first view of the Golden Horn, and the opening of the Bosphorus, far exceeded even the highly-raised expectations of our travellers; and the places pointed out on the way—Scutari with its gigantic Barrack Hospital, and its burial-ground alongside, St. Sophia and its golden dome, and all the rest—awakened a host of thrilling and sorrowful recollections, which lasted till Miseri's boat, gliding among the mass of 'caiques,' which were skimming their way, like those little birds of unrest, across the Bosphorus, recalled them to present necessities, and soon landed them at the Admiralty Port, where four gaily-painted sedan chairs conveyed them through the frowning guns of the arsenal up the steep narrow street, and, finally, deposited them safely in the courtyard of that most comfortable and well-known hotel—destined to be the residence of two of the party during so many anxious weeks of sickness and tedious convalescence.

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